

## Election '97

MAJOR GIVES MORE CASH TO SCHOOLS  
INSIDE BLAIR'S LIVING ROOM PAGES 8 & 9

### IN THE TABLOID:

THE NOVELIST  
AND THE  
KILLER WASP

### INSIDE THE TABLOID: 16-PAGE PULL-OUT

NETWORK+  
THE CYBERSPACE  
VOTE



Whitney Forrester, 7, who faces deportation, clings to her father, Gilroy. Photograph: Kalpesh Lathigra

## Britain throws out seven-year-old girl

Glenda Cooper  
Social Affairs Correspondent

A seven-year-old girl faces deportation to an orphanage 3,000 miles away from her family, despite pleas from her natural father that he is willing and able to care for her.

The Home Office was yesterday accused of being inhuman and racist by sending Whitney Forrester back to Jamaica on Wednesday. There, social services will place her in an orphanage because there is no relative to care for her.

"I thought this Government was concerned about keeping families together but they are trying to take my daughter away from me," said her father, Gilroy, who has lived in London for nearly seven years.

The Home Office says she is being removed because she did not apply for entry clearance from the British High Commission in Kingston. The family said they were unaware such a procedure was necessary, particularly since her stay was not

intended to be permanent when she came last October.

Last year, Whitney's mother abandoned her, after her new fiance refused to support the child. While Whitney was in Britain, her aunt, who had taken charge of her, said she was no longer able to do so because she had a new job which entailed a lot of travelling.

At a press conference yesterday, Whitney's grandmother, brother, and cousin joined Mr Forrester in pleading for her to stay, saying that she was settled and doing well at school. Eight-year-old Kamisha Brown said:

"It is disgusting that my cousin should be sent back home. Jamaica is a very hard country."

Close to tears, her grandmother, Violet Forrester, said that Whitney was already frightened at being sent back: "She understands a bit what is going on and has stopped eating."

The Conservatives commonly portray themselves as the party of the family - yet they are prepared to tear a black child from the bosom of a loving par-

**QUICKLY**  
The world's first law allowing voluntary euthanasia was itself put to death last night, less than a year after its birth, when the Australian Senate voted to overturn the Rights of the Terminally Ill Act brought in by the Northern Territory last July. Page 14

**Euthanasia reversal**  
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**No help from Palestine**  
The Palestinian leadership has rejected Israel's demand for security co-operation in the wake of the suicide bomb in Tel Aviv. Mohammed Dahlan, head of the Palestine Security Service in Gaza, yesterday said: "We stopped the security activities ...

**THE TABLOID**  
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## Eat up your greens and grow ancient like the Greeks



Annabel Ferriman

More than 30,000 lives could be saved each year if Britons only did what their mothers always told them - and ate their greens,

heart experts said yesterday.

Eating at least five portions

of vegetables and fruit a day

could reduce the 150,000 deaths

from heart disease by 20 and 30 per cent, said Professor Michael Marmot, Britain's leading cardiovascular epidemiologist.

But vegetables have a poor

image, and are seen as "boring,

unappetising and difficult to

prepare", according to two re-

ports from the National Heart

Forum, an umbrella group of

heart charities, medical bodies

and disease prevention groups.

Britons eat on average three

portions of fruit and vegetables

a day, a third as much as the

Greeks (who top the European league), and less than

eight other European nations.

The UK's death rate from coro-

nary heart disease is the second

highest in Europe, only Ireland's

is higher. The French have the

lowest, followed by the Spanish, Italians and Greeks.

Doctors do not know what in-

gredient in fruit and vegetables

confers protection against heart

disease, but suspect it might be

the antioxidant effect of

vitamins C, E and beta carotene.

Vitamin pills do not work as

well, however. Professor Mar-

mot said that the answer to our

death rate lay in the vegetable

rack, rather than the medicine

cabinet.

The picture which emerges

from the epidemiological stud-

ies of antioxidants - from both

dietary sources and pills - is

mixed. None of the long-term

trials of antioxidant supple-

ments have shown a reduction

in heart disease deaths. And

there is some evidence to show

that supplements of Vitamin A

and beta carotene can actually

increase risk of heart disease

and lung cancer, especially for

smokers," Professor Marmot

said.

The good news is that it does

not matter how you eat your

vegetables, as long as you eat

them. "Whatever shape or form

they are, it's good for you,"

Ms Sharp said.

Low income households and

those in Scotland and northern

England also have the highest

rates of heart disease. They will

need to double their daily in-

take of fruit and vegetables to

get the benefit, she said.

She wishes to eat them - fresh,

frozen, dried or canned - vegeta-

bles and fruit can only do us

good," said Imogen Sharp, di-

rector of the National Heart Fo-

rum.

"Vegetables and fruit are

poorly promoted. A total of

£71m is spent annually in the

UK advertising chocolate and

confectionery, contrasting with

only £2.9m for vegetables and

fruit," she added.

The Government and food

industry should follow the lead

of the US and launch a £25m

co-ordinated five-year cam-

paign to persuade people to eat

at least five a day."

Ms Sharp said that children

and people on low incomes, as

well as regions of low con-

sumption, must be the focus of

the national strategy. "Two-

thirds of 16-24 year olds eat fruit

less than once a day and almost

half eat vegetables less than

once a day," she said.

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&lt;p



# Campaign to clear Hanratty suffers setback

Jason Bennett  
Crime Correspondent

Bentley, hanged in 1953 for the murder of a policeman, and the M25 Three, who were jailed for life for murder in 1990.

The campaign to clear James Hanratty, who was hanged 35 years ago for the A6 murder, suffered a setback yesterday after the Home Office washed its hands of the case.

The alleged miscarriage of justice will now be heard by the new Criminal Cases Review Commission, which will cause long delays. Officials have also off-loaded the cases of Derek

Bentley, hanged in 1953 for the murder of a policeman, and the M25 Three, who were jailed for life for murder in 1990.

The moves were condemned by campaigners yesterday as a pre-election, face-saving ploy. They argued that the moves were a sop to the pro-hanging lobby. It comes after the Home Office pledged that the Hanratty case would be dealt with by the end of this month.

The decision saves Michael Howard, the Home Secretary,

from having to make tricky and potentially damaging decisions to refer the cases to the Court of Appeal.

*The Independent* revealed in January that inquiries by Home Office officials and the police had concluded that Hanratty was wrongly convicted and executed in April 1962.

He was convicted of shooting a government scientist, Michael Gregson, at Deadman's Hill, on the A6 in Bedfordshire, in 1961. He was also found guilty of rap-

ing Gregson's girlfriend, Valerie Storie, and of shooting her, leaving her paralysed.

The solicitors for the Hanratty family and the Review Commission confirmed yesterday that the A6 murder would be given to the new independent body. Robin Lewis, partner in Bindman solicitors, said he had received a letter on Monday from the Home Office C3 department, which ceases to deal with alleged miscarriages of justice from the end of this

month, about the Hanratty case. "It effectively said, 'Sorry chaps, but we don't have time to sort this one out and are handing it over,' he said.

A 400-page submission, arguing for the case to be referred to the Court of Appeal, was submitted to the Home Office in 1994. Among the other cases to be considered by the Commission, which will have to review all the material again before making a decision, are Derek Bentley, who at the age of 19

was convicted with Christopher Craig, 16, after police caught the two breaking into a warehouse. Bentley was arrested but Craig shot and fatally wounded a policeman. Police said this was after Bentley cried out: "Let him have it, Chris."

Bentley strongly denied this but was hanged in 1953. His family have been campaigning for a pardon and for the case to be referred to the Court of Appeal.

Bentley's niece, Maria Bentley, said yesterday: "I can only

think these decisions are political. A large proportion of Tory voters support hanging and the Government does not want to jeopardise their support."

Another high-profile case to be dealt with by the Commission is that of the so-called M25 Three. Michael Davis, 26, and Randolph Johnson, 28, were jailed in 1990 for the murder of Peter Hurlburgh in Warrington, Surrey, in 1988, and for a series of other offences. The three

men are black, although victims described the assailants as two whites and one black.

The Home Office said the cases were being handed over to the new Commission purely because they had run out of time. It has been suggested that Mr Howard may have felt obliged to consult Jack Straw, Labour's home affairs spokesman, about any controversial decisions in the run up to the election, but that he wanted to avoid doing so.

## Tate goes on the tiles as museums cash in on the world of interiors

David Lister  
Arts News Editor

The Tate, Gallery and the Victoria and Albert Museum are set to make their names as dinner party accessories.

The two national institutions are hoping that design conscious hostesses will want walls painted in Tate Gallery "minimal blue" and sideboards gleaming with Victoria and Albert Museum polish.

If that fails to impress the dinner party guests, then wait till they need a pee. There, in the bathroom, are Paula Rego tiles, hand painted by one of the most acclaimed contemporary figurative artists.

And that necklace the hostess keeps running her fingers through so conspicuously. That is designed by Maggi Hambling herself, darling, my own little gesture towards conceptualism.

Britain's best known art institutions have decided to raise both money and awareness by ploughing into the commercial arena of home furnishings.

Habitat, the middle class home furnishings nirvana, has been licensed by the Tate Gallery to sell Tate household paints. And the V & A is going to allow its name to be put on a new brand of supermarket furniture polish. The Tate will also be issuing the works of Paula Rego on limited edition tiles. Both the Tate and the V & A have decided to make new departures in their marketing strategies in order to raise money and win a new breed of visitor for their collections.

A spokeswoman for the Tate said yes-



Paula Rego tiles: The Tate says limited editions from the leading contemporary figurative artist would look good in the bathroom

Photograph: Kalpesh Lathiga

terday. "We want to promote the Tate to a new audience, the sort of people who would shop at Habitat, the 25-35s who are interested in interior design, and we think would also be interested in coming to the Tate." She added that the Paula Rego hand painted tiles were decorative and could "certainly be used in the bathroom".

In addition to the Paula Rego hand decorated tiles, the Tate's own shop in the

Gallery will be selling jewellery designed by Maggi Hambling and greeting cards by contemporary artists, including Fiona Rae, Tim Head, Lubaina Himid and Michael Landy.

Rego, who has a retrospective show on at the Tate, Liverpool, was commissioned by the Tate to produce the hand-painted tiles from her original designs, selling at £50 each. In a separate commercial exploita-

tion of its own name, the Tate's director, Nicholas Serota, has given Habitat permission to sell Tate household paints in its 38 stores. They will retail at £19 each, with £1 on every sale going to the gallery.

Habitat claims the colours of the household paints are named after movements in modern art, though the connection appears a loose one. The store will be selling future orange, modern yellow, abstract green, min-

imal blue, real turquoise and pure white.

The Tate's move into commercial exploitation is matched by the latest venture from the V & A, which is to launch its own range of furniture care products.

Ken Manning, head of marketing at V & A Enterprises, the museum's commercial arm, said the expertise of the museum's conservation department could contribute to creating a new polish: "Some

products for the very elite market probably already have the qualities we hope ours will have, but we want to endorse a mass market product. I hope the polishes will be sold in supermarkets.

The museum already licenses companies to sell V & A products including wallpaper, carpets, bed linen, china, glass and clothes, particularly wedding dresses and christening gowns.

## A twat, a sprat and a whale help Today lose the plot

Paul McCann  
Media Correspondent

The *Today* programme lost the plot yesterday as a twat, a sprat and a 40ft sperm whale cut a swathe of hilarity through the presenters of the BBC's most serious news programme.

The trouble started with an item in the Sam news bulletin from Papua New Guinea where

the government has appointed General Jack Tiat as chief of staff to calm troops following the furore over its use of mercenaries.

Unfortunately Mr Tiat's name is pronounced "twat".

Immediately after the report about Mr Tiat's promotion, Charlotte Green, Radio 4's experienced news reader and continuity announcer, had to read

a report about the 40ft sperm whale stuck in the Firth of Forth. The clash of the two items proved too much for her and after a few words her report on Moby the whale disappeared in a fit of giggles.

Once Ms Green had struggled through the short item she handed over to presenter James Naughtie who, it has to be said, sounds a more humourous chap

anyway. Poor Mr Naughtie was then faced with a very serious story about the escape tunnel discovered at the Maze prison in Belfast. Waiting on the line was a very angry spokesman from the Northern Ireland Prison Officers' Association.

Unfortunately, the POA spokesman's name was Mr Findlay Spratt.

Now we are sure that Mr

Spratt is a very serious and important man – and that James Naughtie thinks so too – but unfortunately after Ms Green's giggles, Mr Naughtie balked at the name on his prompt sheet and could not help a guffaw himself.

However, Mr Naughtie did call him Mr Spratt, as a careful listening to a tape of the programme later proved, even if up

and down the country millions were convinced Naughtie had actually welcomed a Mr Prat.

A BBC spokesman said later that he would not want anyone to suggest the presenters' professionalism was anything but total. These things happen, he said.

Ms Green is one of the

broadcaster's most familiar voices. Her precision and clarity

are required for slots such as the *Shipping Forecast*, where mariner's lives may be on the line.

She famously managed to keep a straight voice even when required to introduce the cast of a Radio 4 play called *Heartache*: "Richard Griffiths as the Brain, Lee Montague as the Heart, Jim Broadbent as the Stomach, and David de Keyser

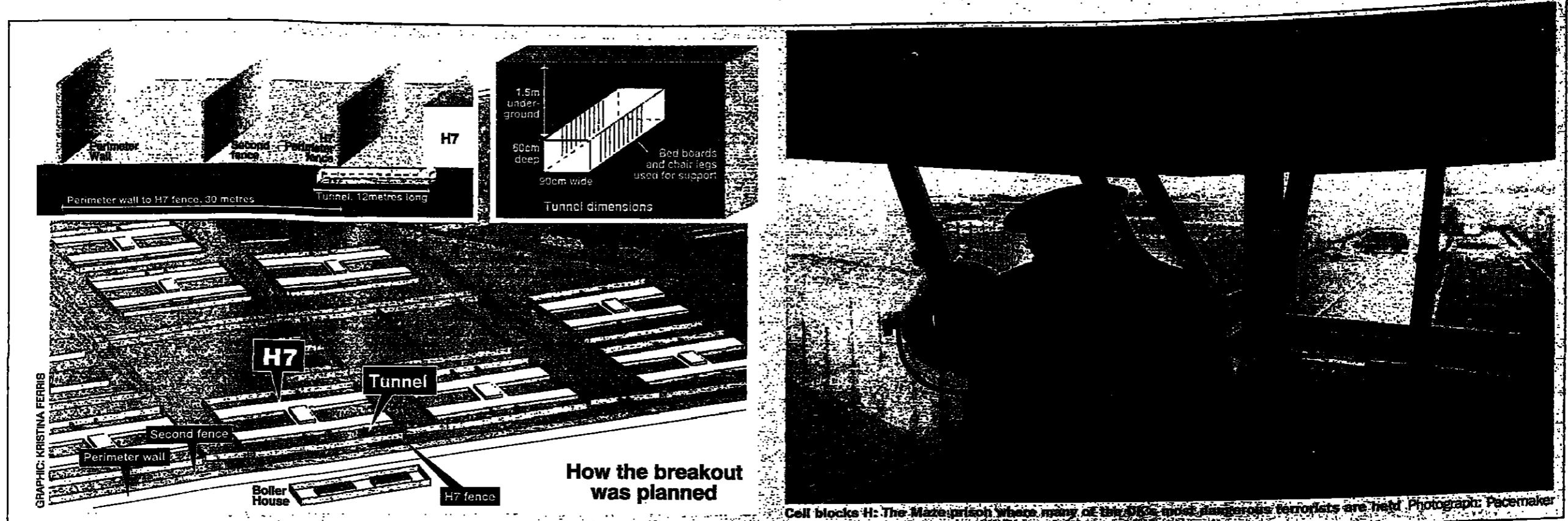
as the Penis." However, yesterday was not the first time she has shown a capacity for hysterics.

She was one of the highlights of Radio 4's News Quiz last year, on which she reads out panelists' cuttings when Alan Coren ambushed her by reading out her announcement of "a cross-flannel cherry" being grounded on a sand bank.

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## No way out: IRA's great escape plot is foiled

David McKittrick  
Ireland Correspondent

The discovery of a 40ft (12m) long tunnel dug by IRA prisoners in the Maze prison, supposedly the UK's most secure jail, yesterday led to a major security alert in Northern Ireland.

The tunnel began from a cell in H-7, one of the H-blocks which became known to the world during the republican hunger strikes of the early 1980s. Its discovery led to Unionist calls for an inquiry and the

disciplining of senior staff. The tunnel had passed underneath a fence around the H-block. To reach the outside world beyond the prison's high outer perimeter wall the IRA prisoners had another 90ft to cover.

Had this been achieved, 95 republicans, all classed as high-security prisoners, could have been let loose into the countryside. Such an incident would have dwarfed even the 1983 IRA "great escape", when 38 IRA inmates broke out through the main gate.

As it is, the incident is embar-

rassing for the Government and calls into question the unique way in which the prison is run.

The tunnel was at least 5ft underground and was lit by electric light, which has been a feature of IRA tunnels since at least the 1970s.

Prison staff said it was shored up with chairlegs and in particular with bedboards which had been provided for inmates with supposedly sore backs.

Finlay Spratt, of the Prison Officers' Association, said: "It would appear they could request the

bedboards when they wanted one, and nobody seemed to keep any check on it."

Mr Spratt has repeatedly complained in recent years that prisoners have almost unlimited freedom within the H-blocks.

Inside each block, cells are not locked, there is free association, and prisoners are organised not by staff but by the paramilitary organisations to which they belong. Searches are often resisted.

All attempts by the authorities over a quarter of a century have

failed to eradicate this strong element of paramilitary control. It was clearly the existence of such a regime which made feasible the building of a tunnel.

It was apparently discovered when a prison officer on a routine patrol noticed some subsidence and raised the alert. The 95 republicans in H7 were moved to another block to allow a search of their quarters, where rubble was found dumped in a number of places. Visits to republican prisoners have been suspended.

Mr Spratt added yesterday: "The

fact that we have no effective search policy to conduct searches allowed the prisoners to construct this tunnel without any hindrance or investigation by staff. An officer has told me that six months ago he reported

"They are prisoners of war, they look upon themselves as prisoners of war. It is their duty to escape from jail."

I suppose they will be disappointed. However, they have made the effort and they can feel good about that. Fair play to them."

During a lengthy IRA career, Mr Kelly himself made six escape attempts from prison, three of which were successful. In 1974, IRA inmates dug a 134ft long tunnel to escape from the same prison.

Gerry Kelly, the party's election

# WILL THEY HELP FIGHT STROKE - THE COUNTRY'S THIRD BIGGEST KILLER?

The Stroke Association is calling for a greater priority to be given to stroke. Stroke can affect anyone, whatever their age or politics. It shatters lives and is the largest cause of severe disability.

The Stroke Association has published an Agenda For Action and is calling for

urgent improvements in stroke prevention, treatment and care.

**The STROKE  
Association**

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The Stroke Association raises funds for research, prevention, welfare, information and community services.

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## Prisoners bound by code of honour

David McKittrick

was stabbed and died, though at a subsequent trial it emerged that he had a serious heart condition, and the judge ruled it could not be said the stabbing had caused his death.

In 1974, a republican in-

ternee successfully tunneled out of the Maze, but was shot dead by a soldier on the perimeter. Ten years later a loyalist inmate, attempting to escape inside a refuse lorry, became caught up in its mechanism and was killed.

The history of the Troubles

is studded with escape attempts, most of them unsuccessful.

The most ambitious, prior to the dis-

covery of this tunnel, came in

1989 when the IRA planned to

blow up a wall of Crumlin

Road jail with a 1,000lb bomb

and was killed.

In 1974, while on hunger-strike in Britain, he almost suc-

ceeded in breaking out of

Wormwood Scrubs, but was

spotted on top of the prison's

outer wall. After being trans-

ferred to the Maze prison he

made two unsuccessful attempts

before breaking out in 1983.

Such adventures are boosts

for republican morale, but they

often have lethal consequences.

In the 1983 breakout, a warden

The Maze, on a 130-acre site in countryside outside Lisburn, Co Antrim, is really a series of prisons within a prison. The eight H-blocks are each capable of housing nearly 100 men.

IRA prisoners are held in three of the units, the INLA in one and the loyalist UDA and UVF have one each and another between them.

One block is always kept empty for emergencies - like yesterday's, when the IRA men in H-block 7 were moved to H-block 8 after the discovery of their escape tunnel.

Prison officers keep the men within their H-block compounds but inside they can more or less do what they want when they want, subject to their paramilitary commanders.

Cell doors are left open, paramilitary emblems and murals adorn the walls. Televisions and videos are provided in association rooms on each wing of the blocks.

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Families take historic stand against council for withdrawing protection against noise pollution

## Bedrooms on the hard shoulder of a motorway: welcome to the homes from hell

Ian Burrell

When five-year-old Blue Rendell looks out of the bedroom window, she could be sat on the hard shoulder of a motorway. The judgement that thunders past, barely 10ft away, is one of 86,000 vehicles that cross Canning Town fly-over each day, subjecting the Rendell family to a constant din equivalent to the

sound of a pneumatic drill operating outside the house.

The local council's idea of giving the Rendells and other families in the poor east London neighbourhood a little respite was to rip out their protective windows. Yesterday, in a historic action, 16 Canning Town families, all local authority tenants, served summonses on the London Borough of Newham,

seeking damages for noise nuisance and breach of contract.

The case is remarkable in that council environmental health officers are meant to police noise pollution. Yet they cannot prosecute their own bosses.

So, the families have brought their own county court action. Solicitor Clare Hodgson, of Leigh Day in London, said: "It's astonishing the council can take

away such essential noise protection and not consider the consequences. My clients' lives have been very seriously effected. We will be pressing for fast and effective action from Newham and damages for the harm they have caused."

The families say they feel that they are living "sat on a pavement". Freight lorries go past throughout the night.

The windows of the Rendells' front bedroom have been smashed by stones thrown up by passing traffic. Hub caps have landed in the garden, along with a section of central reservation.

Blue's mother, Jackie, 34, said: "My children live closest to school, but have the worst attendance records, because they are woken up every few minutes."

The neighbourhood was quiet when the houses went up in 1972. A year later the fly-over was built, opening a gateway from the City to the Essex coast. The Highways Agency agreed to fit houses in and around Lawrence Street, adjacent to the fly-over, with protective windows. Their replacements did not. Noise levels of 60 decibels inside the houses are now more than double the level they were

before the council took action. The new windows were so poorly fitted that some tenants could put a hand through a gap between the glass and the frame. Rain poured in.

A council spokesman said the matter had been discussed by the authority's housing committee. He would not discuss the legal action in advance of the council preparing its defence.

Room with no view: Blue Rendell looking out of the window of her bedroom at the traffic on the Canning Town fly-over

Photograph: Kalpesh Lathigra



## Britain given final warning over sheep-dip dangers

Nicholas Schoon

The European Commission is poised to prosecute Britain in the European Court of Justice over the way the UK allows its farmers to dispose of sheep dip chemicals.

The poisonous insecticides, implicated in Gulf War syndrome and chronic illness suffered by dozens of sheep farmers, can still be disposed of after dipping by pouring them on to farmland mixed with slurry. The commission's view is that they should go to hazardous waste sites. Now it has issued a formal "Reasoned Opinion" to the Government, warning that Britain is not complying with the European Union's groundwater protection directive.

This is the final stage before the matter is taken to the court and the Government now has two months in which to respond.

The move follows a complaint to the commission by Brian Anderson, who has been ill for seven years since drinking water from the well which

served his home and had been contaminated by the chemicals.

The Tay River Purification Board said at the time that samples showed contamination by diazinon, an organophosphate chemical which had been used by a neighbouring farmer to protect his flock against insect attack. After dipping, the water was drained on to his land and mixed with the groundwater.

"I'm delighted that something is happening," said Mr Anderson, 55, who lives at Blair Gowrie near Perth. "I just resent the way the Government refuses to take cases like mine seriously." He had to give up work running a bed and breakfast and a nursery and now suffers lethargy, memory loss, headaches and constant aches and tingling in his legs.

"I'd just come in from helping to coach the school rugby team," he said yesterday. "As soon as I drank the water I felt a burning in my throat and stomach. Now I can't stand up for more than 10 minutes and

## Fears over blood plasma link to CJD

Charles Arthur  
Science Editor

The fatal brain disorder Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (CJD) can be passed by blood transfusions, according to an American scientist who presented his findings to the World Health Organisation yesterday.

Experiments with mice have shown that blood plasma is capable of transmitting the disease agent. This would also apply to the "new variant" of CJD (v-CJD), thought to be derived from the agent which causes bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), or mad cow disease.

The work was carried out by Paul Brown, a leading scientist in both BSE and CJD based at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland. He injected blood from mice infected with CJD into the brains of healthy mice, which then became ill.

The implications of his work, which is not yet published, are that blood and blood products donated by people who subsequently die of v-CJD should be removed from blood banks.

But the UK National Blood Authority said last night that it was not notified of any such cases and has not been instructed to trace any donations from people who die of v-CJD.

However, it did tighten its rules on blood donation by families and relatives of CJD

victims in August last year. Meanwhile yesterday, the father of the fifteenth person to die in the UK of v-CJD – 19-year-old Matthew Parker, who died at the weekend – accused the Government of murder. John Middleton said: "This

The Government has murdered my son and I want someone to be accountable for his death.

has been a cover-up from day one. The Government knew it was giving infected feed to cattle and knew that would be passed into the human food chain. They have murdered my son and I want someone to be accountable for his death. Someone must stand up and admit it's their fault."

Two more Britons who have been diagnosed as having v-CJD are still alive. In total there are 17 recorded cases, compared with 10 at this time last year when the Government first announced the existence of a link between BSE and v-CJD.

## CAN YOU HELP MAKE STROKE A NATIONAL PRIORITY?

If you would like to stop stroke shattering lives, please sign The Stroke Association's petition calling for action:

- to prevent more strokes through the monitoring and treatment of high blood pressure, the biggest risk factor for stroke;
- to treat stroke as an emergency to improve the chances of recovery of people who have strokes through prompt hospital admission, assessment and treatment;
- to increase access to rehabilitation to give every stroke patient the best chance of recovering and regaining independence.

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The Stroke Association raises funds for research, prevention, welfare, information and community services.

Registered Charity No. 211015.

IND 23 327

## news

# Desperate cargo: why ever more stowaways are willing to risk all

Patricia Wynn Davies

Refugee experts called yesterday for tougher action on the plight of stowaway migrants who are increasingly falling prey to traffickers in the face of

tightening asylum rules in European Union countries.

Speaking after the death of a 12-year-old African boy who stowed away in the wheel arch of a Jumbo jet on Saturday night, Claude Moraes, director

of the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants, said he estimated that the number of clandestine entrants was rising because of an increase in the activities of traffickers prepared to cash in on human misery.

Mr Moraes and Louise Williamson, director of the children's division at the Refugee Council, both warned that the problem of stowaways – including unaccompanied children – could only worsen as EU

countries erected higher barriers against would-be asylum-seekers.

Ms Williamson said: "We have to look at the whole question of just how difficult it is to get to this country legally." She

went on to dispute the suggestion made on Sunday that a young person seeking to flee his country alone was a rarity.

While the majority were not stowaways, in the year ending March 1995, the council re-

Vain effort: Keith Sapior, a 14-year-old stowaway, falls to his death from a Japan Airlines jet taking off from Sydney airport on 22 February 1970. Photograph: AP

ceived 361 referrals from unaccompanied young people from 40 countries, 87 of whom were 14 or under, she said. The following year there were 626 referrals, 112 of whom were 14 or under.

The tragic ending to the attempt by the 12-year-old to reach Britain is the latest in a string of incidents in which migrants have opted to risk the suffering and deprivation – or even death – experienced in cargo holds on ships and aircraft and the backs of lorries rather than the political or economic privations of their home countries.

Ground staff at Gatwick airport found the boy's mutilated body after a British Airways 747 arrived from Nairobi, Kenya, on Sunday morning. He was crushed by the front wheel, which retracts after take-off.

The death follows political unrest in Kenya in the past few weeks, culminating in the death of Solomon Muruli, a student leader. Earlier this month, the body of Vijay Saini was found in Richmond, south-west London, after he froze to death in the landing gear bay of a BA flight from Delhi, India.

His brother, Pandeep, managed to survive temperatures as low as minus 50C in another wheel arch and is at present having his asylum application considered.

It is not in dispute that some stowaways will be "economic migrants" rather than genuine refugees fleeing a war situation.

But Mr Moraes said: "There has been an increase in the numbers of stowaways who would in the past have had a case. Now they are desperate enough to face extremes of heat or cold or the possibility of dying."

He said that he had received reports from agricultural areas in Kent and East Anglia that illegal immigrants were being exploited as cheap seasonal labour.

The prospects for most stowaways appears bleak, however. Sniffer dogs trained to detect human odour are routinely employed at Britain's south coast ports and those not detected can face horrible deaths.

At least 11 African men have recently died in the holds of ships, either from dehydration or the effects of pesticide. Last September, a Russian stowaway froze to death in the luggage hold of an Aeroflot flight to Rome.

## DAILY POEM

### To John Clare

by John Clare

Well, honest John, how fare you now at home?  
The Spring is come and birds are building nests,  
The old cock robin to the sty is come  
With olive feathers and its ruddy breast.  
And the old cock with wattles and red comb  
Struts with the hens and seems to like some best,  
Then crows and looks about for little crumbs  
Swept out by little folks an hour ago.  
The pigs sleep in the sty; the bookman comes,  
The little boys lets home-close-nesting go  
And pocket tops and taws where daisies bloom  
To look at the new number just laid down  
With lots of pictures and good stories too  
And Jack the Giant-killer's high renown.

Until the end of next week, the "Daily Poem" will be taken from the latest volumes in the Everyman's Poetry series, published by Everyman/JM Dent. Each volume costs £2 and includes a critical introduction and chronology. John Clare is edited by RKR Thornton. The John Clare addressed in this poem was probably the poet's son, born in 1826.

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مكتبة الأحوال

# Holy order hitches up its habits to go surfing



Oh brother: Father Nicholas (left) with Father Cenydd and computer at Belmont Abbey, Hereford

Photograph: Richard Stanton

## Chris Mowbray

And it came to pass that an order of holy brothers, who were seeking new ways of keeping a roof over their heads in the commercial cut and thrust of the 20th century, looked upon the Internet with interest – and so, it was good.

So the Benedictine monks launched a company called Monksoft and started advertising in cyberspace for holiday breaks at their 140-year-old abbey.

The 45-strong community at Belmont Abbey, near Hereford, found that they needed a new source of income when their independent boys' school closed down due to a shortage of pupils.

Their prayers were answered when one of their abbot's friends, Fr. Mark, a computer buff who writes his own programmes, offered use of his earthly talents. For behold, it is not written: "By their deeds shall ye know them".

Now paying guests from as far afield as the United States know about the brothers from their advertisement in cyberspace and travel to the abbey to enjoy a peaceful holiday in its tranquil gardens and surrounding countryside.

Fr Nicholas, the managing

director of Monksoft, said yesterday: "We have extended Saint Benedict's idea of hospitality somewhat beyond what he originally envisaged, but he was all for welcoming people to our doors."

"We are only doing in a comput-

## Monastic trade

The Trappist religious order has brewed and sold beer for centuries, particularly in Belgium and Holland. Others, such as the Cistercians and the Benedictines, have allowed their name to be used on beer and wine.

Monks at the Benedictine Buckfast Abbey, Devon – famed for its honey and tonic wine – have formed a "common market" with a shop selling products made by orders across Europe.

The Cistercian brothers on Cawdor Island, Dyfed, sell perfumes, chocolates and dairy products from a pedigree herd of 70 Jersey cows.

Religious music in general and Gregorian chants in particular have been real money-spinners for several religious orders.

erised way what monasteries have always done. Throughout history they have welcomed guests from all walks of life from kings and queens to pilgrims and the poor.

People on holiday are not usually interested in the monastic side, but we also run retreats for guests who want to take part in our life and prayer or share in some peace and quiet.

The abbey also offers bed-and-breakfast to travelling business people and is a member of the Heart of England Tourist Board and the South Herefordshire Tourism Association Bed Bureau. It rents out its refurbished school dining room for wedding receptions and other parties, provides conference facilities and encourages visits by schools.

Monksoft also operates a sideline printing parish and school magazines, wedding booklets and its own Christmas cards and stationery based on desktop-publishing packages written by its surfing abbot.

"When our school closed, we had to do something else to raise money," Fr Nicholas said.

"Fr Mark has also written some computer programmes to help us run the company and we chose the name Monksoft because it seems so appropriate."

## Contract killer in feud murder bid gets life

Kim Sengupta

The Old Bailey was told how the vicious war between the Brindle family and another family called Daly, in south London, claimed at least eight lives in five years.

During the Ulster ceasefire, paramilitary gunmen began to be used by gangsters in Britain to carry out contract hits. The Brindles and the Dalys had links with Ireland. The Dalys had worked with drug baron George Mitchell in the South.

The Brindles did business with the loyalists of east Belfast. This connection brought Boyle to London from his native Dublin. He had contact with criminals in Dublin, especially Mitchell, and had served a 12-year sentence for kidnapping.

Boyle also acted as a Garda informer and told them about the contract on the Brindles. His handler warned him not to get involved but stressed that he should continue his close contact with Mitchell to get information on drugs. The details were passed on by Dublin to Scotland Yard.

A police surveillance team kept watch on potential targets in the Brindle family, the court was told. They were disguised as gas men when Boyle arrived. Despite the police watch Boyle was shot three times on his doorstep in Rotherhithe, south London. Undercover officers then shot Boyle before he could finish the job.

In this case, there is a background of a feud which has lasted over many years and has cost eight lives, and it is something of a miracle that there was not a ninth life lost as a result of your conduct."

Boyle's co-defendant, David Roads, 51, of Croydon, south London, was convicted of possessing an explosive substance, firearms, and handling stolen goods. He was sentenced to 10 years. The jury was told Roads had acted as a quartermaster in the operation to shoot Brindle and had armed Boyle, a former intelligence officer with both the IRA and INLA.



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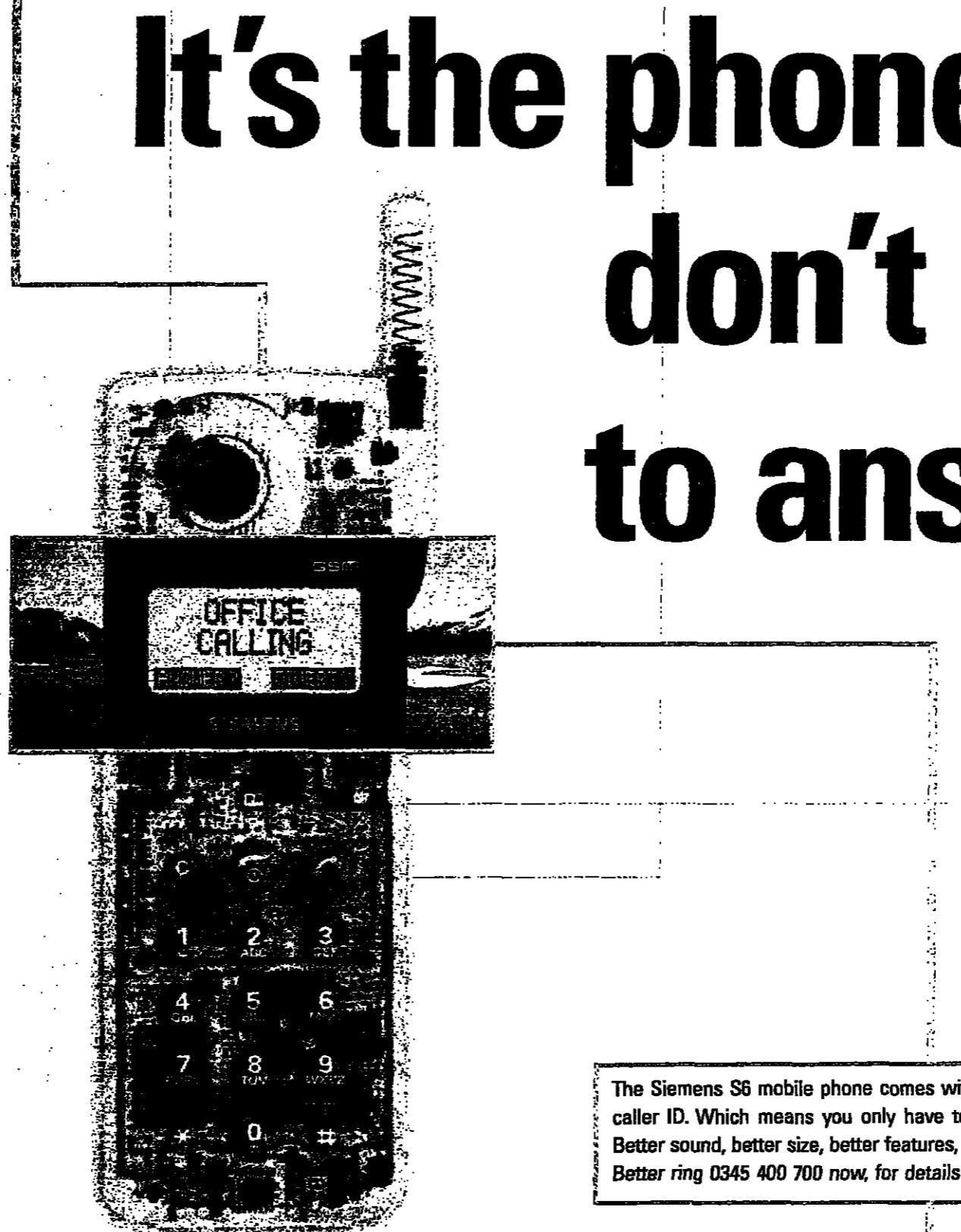
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## election countdown

## Tories target Labour hospital closure plan

Fran Abrams  
Political Correspondent

All Tory candidates are to challenge their Labour opponents on hospital closures after revelations in yesterday's *Independent* that the party is planning to close hospitals to save £3m for dental checks, less rationing of treatment and better salaries for doctors and nurses.

Although Labour has denied that it has any such plans,

the Conservatives moved swiftly yesterday to exploit the revelation, which is bound to spark public anger.

Stephen Dorrell, the Secretary of State for Health, wrote to all his party's prospective MPs enclosing a list of hospitals which he said would be at risk under Labour's plans. They should challenge Labour candidates to say that the future of those facilities was safe, he said.

At a briefing with journalists,

he said the report in yesterday's *Independent* "blows the gaff" on the opposition's health policies. The Conservatives have repeatedly challenged Labour to say that it will raise health spending year on year.

"It is simple arithmetic that within the overall total they will have to impose cuts in the hospital service to make the figures add up."

The story in *The Independent* blows the gaff on their health policy. We know and have

known for some time that the key difference between the Conservatives' health policy and Labour's is that the Conservatives will deliver."

Mr Dorrell also highlighted a survey of fundholding general practitioners in which more than nine out of 10 said they would oppose Labour's plans to abolish practice-based budgets.

Chris Smith, Labour's health spokesman, reacted angrily yesterday, dismissing the report - which detailed plans which

Labour believes will raise £2bn over a number of years - as "complete rubbish". He has, however, confirmed that a Labour government would try to save money by merging the management of NHS trusts.

"It is this government who cannot be trusted with our hospitals. They have closed 245 since 1990. Unlike the Tories we are interested in what is best for patients, not creating more bureaucrats," he said.

Mr Smith added that Labour

had put a moratorium on further hospital closures while an independent review of the hospital needs of the capital was carried out.

The party has also said that local hearings should be held wherever the closure of a hospital or hospital facility is promised. There was new evidence yesterday that a number of senior figures in hospital trusts believe their futures lie in mergers with neighbouring trusts.

want some mergers. Indeed it is probably desirable that the more obvious trusts should merge as soon as possible before the public bonds with them.

Mr Dorrell has sent a list of 66 "at risk" hospitals to candidates, based on a suggestion from the Audit Commission that those hospitals which have fewer than 50,000 patients registering each year should be examined to see whether they can provide adequate quality of care.

One trust chairman said: "Which ever party wins the general election on the first of May, the incoming government will

There she is...that one from you know...haven't we seen her on the telly?



Glenda Jackson (centre), Labour MP for Hampstead and Highgate, canvassing the marginal seat of Redditch in Hereford and Worcester yesterday on behalf of the party's candidate Jacqui Smith

Photographs: Brian Harris

## Teachers warn on schools spending

Lucy Ward  
Education Correspondent

A future Labour government must be prepared to break its promise of a two-year freeze on public spending and pump more money into education.

Speaking on the first day of the Association of Teachers and Lecturers conference in Cardiff, the union's general secretary, Peter Smith, said that by sticking to the spending pledge "like Araldite", Shadow Chancellor Gordon Brown would provoke cynicism among teachers and voters.

It was questionable whether the party would be able to tackle problems it had identified as needing attention, he said.

Mr Smith called on Labour to review spending on education within its first 100 days in power if it gained office on 1 May. Increasing cash for schools should be its top education priority, since the sector had been squeezed "till the pips squeaked."

A recent Harris poll commissioned by ATL revealed 86 per cent of the public thought more money was top of the list if schools were to improve.

Mr Smith, who heads a moderate union of 150,000 teachers and lecturers, stepped back from condemning Mr Brown, but added: "If he really is saying that for two years he will apply the decision, with no moderation whatsoever, put into place by his predecessor Kenneth Clarke, then it will only be a matter of time before people ask: 'Time for a change? Where is the change in that?'

## Blair husband and wife team caught out by schoolboy error

Steve Boggan catches up with the opposition leader as he launches homework initiative

It was elementary spelling that earned Dan Quayle a place in the history of political gaffes when he told a classroom full of children that "potato" had an 'o' on the end.

Yesterday, it was simple arithmetic that caused blushes in the Blair household when Cherie gave a 10-year-old the wrong answer during the presentation of Tony's big idea on homework.

As political gaffes go, it was a mild one quickly corrected by the Labour leader and handled smoothly and with great humour by a slick husband and wife team.

But it was an illustration of the extent to which a message - in this case the recruitment of Premier football teams to encourage children to do their homework - can be lost in a

growing media maelstrom hungry for splits, cock-ups, injudicious asides and simple errors.

The Blairs were at Hillsborough, the home of Sheffield Wednesday FC, to launch the homework scheme under which four Premiership clubs, supported by private and public finance, would encourage literacy in problem children. Mr Blair was wired up for a satellite link-up with David Blunkett, the shadow education secretary, who was at Chelsea FC, one of the four clubs.

But first he hovered over 10 children aged from 10 to 13 who

sat shivering, doing homework for the benefit of cameras in the middle of the pitch.

"You'll need a rubber for that, it's wrong," he corrected one of them, Tom Lane, 10, from Brookhouse School in nearby Brighton.

Unfortunately for the Labour leader, the lad pointed at Mrs Blair, who uses her maiden name, Booth, in her profession as a barrister, and said: "But she told me..."

"Gosh," said Mr Blair, laughing at his wife. "And you with all those brains, too."

"Oh, alright, show off," she replied. "I'll never hear the end of this, will I?"

Indeed not. Already newsdesks across the country were being alerted to the gaffe. Mark Covell, Labour's regional press officer, said the question was from a Year Six homework paper.

"It said something like 'If you had so much money to take to the fairground, how many rides could you go on?'" he said. "Tom wanted to go on the big wheel. Cherie gave him the wrong answer and Tony quickly corrected him."

"But too late. It had already become the highlight of a rather dull day on the election stump. Earlier, the Blairs had visited the Peak National Park in Derbyshire to drum up support for Tom Levitt, the candidate for High Peak, number 53 on Labour's list of 56 seats it is taking from the Tories if it is to seize power.

No gaffes there as the couple joined children at nature tables in the mud and drizzle. But there was a high point when one Labour media apparatchik dangerously hopped over a cattle grid and ran to the assembled press shouting: "Look, look! They've found a frog!"

With six more weeks to go, questions remain over whether, with such tension in the air, the candidates will crack.

## Tory message gets lost in Devon lanes

Colin Brown  
Chief Political Correspondent

John Major yesterday tried to draw a line under the controversy over the Downey report, but he found he could not get away from it.

Having brushed aside questions about financial improprieties, he did a walkabout in South Street, Braunton, Devon and walked into a hardware shop with the name "Slees" over the door.

Party managers looked agitated when they spotted the error, and Mr Major quickly made his exit. Winners need luck and it appeared to have deserted Mr Major yesterday at the end of a determinedly upbeat tour.

A few paces before stepping into Frank Slees's shop, Mr Major had comfirmed nine-year-old Simon Murray, who complained about being knocked in the eye by one of the photographers covering the trip.

"Life is like that. Occasionally you take a knock, Simon, and then you bounce back," Mr Major said. The Prime Minister sought to bounce back from last week's setback by campaigning in Faddy Ashdown's back yard where there are a string of key marginal which the Tories are defending against the Liberal Democrats, including Exeter, Devon West and Torridge, the seat of Emma Nicholson who defected from the Tories to the Liberal Democrats.

"We are beginning to deal with the real issues. Last week we saw quite astonishing economic figures. Today we saw the balance of payments returning to equilibrium ... all the economic indicators are set extremely fair. I don't think you can drown that out throughout the whole campaign," Mr Major said.

There was little evidence of a swing back to the Tories around the Green Lanes shopping centre in Barnstaple, in the North Devon seat of Nick Harvey, the Liberal Democrat MP. Janet Sanders, a housewife, said she had switched from Tory to Liberal at the last election and would be sticking with the Lib Dems again.

Liberal Democrat support was also holding firm at Braunton where Mr Major and his wife, Norma, had lunch at a fish and chip shop. Unlike Tony Blair, Mr Major looks at home in the chip shop. It suits his man-of-the-people image: he would never mistake mushy peas for avocado mousse.

North Devon is a traditional Liberal seat, which returned Jeremy Thorpe. Tory campaigners are hoping that the appeal of Tony Blair will help them unseat the Liberal Democrats and fight off the challenge in the West Country in seats where they came second last time.

Mr Major is approaching the threat by lumping Mr Ashdown's party with Labour. His message is that a vote for the Liberal Democrats may elect a Labour government but in this corner of the West Country it seemed more likely to encourage than dissuade the voters.

## Old comrades rally to a new cause

Fran Abrams  
Political Correspondent

Rejoice! The Communist manifesto is published again. The British Road to Socialism, was first published in 1951.

The party we are dealing with here is fairly easy to distinguish from other left-wing movements, but until that happens, the proud footsoldiers of the class struggle would quite like it if we were at the Communist Party of Great Britain, which no longer exists.

Or the Democratic Left, from which its 1,200 members split in 1988. Or the Revolutionary Communist Party, which is more ... well, revolutionary.

Or the Workers' Revolutionary Party, which presumably has more workers.

Or the Communist League.

Or the Socialist Party of Great Britain. Or, for that matter, the Socialist Party.

No, this is very definitely the Communist Party of Britain. The party that believes that "the working class and its allies must take political, economic and state power out of the hands of the capitalist class.

This is the party that believes in mass struggle and in the principles of Marx and Lenin. The party that wants you to put Mr Blair into government.

Although the Communist Party of Britain has three candidates of its own standing in the general election it is prepared to take a realistic stance in conceding that it is unlikely to form the next government.

Labour, he added, had a genuine working-class base in the trade union movement. This, in the end, would set it on the right road.

Mr Hicks has not yet received

a message of gratitude from the Labour leader for his party's support, and nor does he expect to receive one. For while the Communist Party of Britain might be backing Labour, it is not backing Tony Blair.

Mike Hicks, the party's general secretary, explained: "We have always taken the distinct position that it is the Labour movement that will be in the position to encourage the Labour Party to take a different course."

Labour, he added, had a genuine working-class base in the trade union movement. This, in the end, would set it on the right road.

Mr Hicks has not yet received

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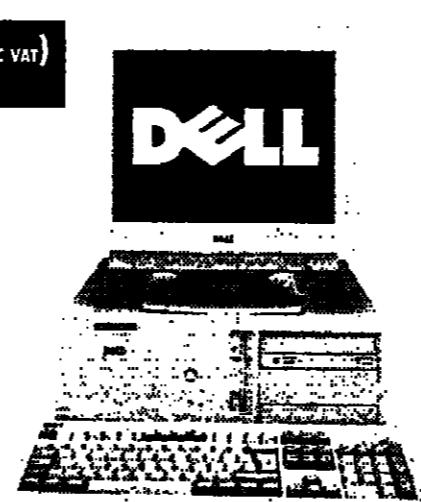
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٥٥٣ من الأصل

## election countdown

# Schools get cash pledge by Major

Colin Brown  
Chief Political Correspondent

John Major announced yesterday that the Tory election manifesto will contain a pledge on legislation to force education authorities to give more money from the Government to schools.

Senior Conservative sources confirmed that the manifesto will say schools should have more discretion over the money they spend.

It will heighten suspicions that the Government is intent on side-stepping Labour education authorities to overcome allegations of cuts in spending on schools while the concession budget has been increased.

The Prime Minister spoke of his frustration in a local radio interview for Lantern FM during a campaigning tour of north Devon.

Answering claims that local schools had been starved of cash, he said: "We still have a problem that too high a percentage of the money that the Government provides for education is held by education authorities at the centre and not dispersed to the individual

schools. So you have a frustrating position – the Government says we have provided more money but the people in the schools say we have less money. Sometimes the people in the schools are right because the authorities have held back the money."

What we propose to do is legislate to make sure the money is not held back by education authorities but make sure it goes through to the school, the headmaster, to the governors in the way they think is most efficient."

The Government first announced plans to force local authorities to increase the amount of money they pass on to schools in a White Paper last summer. It said it would raise the level from 85 per cent to 95 per cent, a move which would increase schools' spending by £90 per pupil, according to Gillian Shepherd, the Secretary of State for Education.

Last night, a spokeswoman for the Department for Education and Employment said it wanted to consult fully before putting forward proposals. No formal consultation paper would now be published before



Caught in the crowd: John Major wooing voters in Braunton, north Devon, yesterday

Photograph: Tom Pilston

the general election, she said.

The plans, under existing arrangements for local management of schools, would be bound to cause some discomfort among local authorities because they would eat into the remaining services which were still

held centrally. Although schools now have control of their own budgets, councils have so far been allowed to keep back 15 per cent to pay for such things as education welfare officers, special needs advisers and school admissions services.

It is likely under the Conservatives' plans for 95 per cent delegation that the education authorities would have to turn most such services into independent agencies and invite schools to buy into them with the extra resources that they

have been given. Both the Conservative and Labour parties are committed to local management of schools, although the Government's previous attempts to force councils to delegate 90 per cent of their budgets were dropped.

Labour has said that it wants to raise the proportion dispensed to schools from 85 per cent to 90 per cent, and that within that figure the amount which should be spent on administration should be no more than £50 per pupil.

Mr Ashdown was determined

to avoid the traditional whistle-stop tour where electors are regaled with mini-monologues from harassed politicians: "I feel that conferring Westminster blessings on some unsuspecting lathe operator is deeply unsatisfactory," he said. Alas, the inevitable tour of the shopping precinct was little more than that, but the one theme which came through strongly was concern about education – the Liberal Democrat hobbyhorse.

Most illuminating, perhaps, was his conversation with media students at Abingdon College who have conducted a survey on the political attitudes of 18 to 25-year-olds. Their findings will depress politicians of all colours. Natalie Thorne said that only about one in five had serious political views: "Most of them don't give a stuff."

## Referendum Party sues over canvassing claim

Michael Streeter

Sir James Goldsmith's Referendum Party yesterday issued a libel writ following allegations that a former Tory agent was paying individuals to persuade people to vote for the party.

A report in yesterday's *Daily Express* said an undercover reporter was offered £50 an hour by Charlotte Blacker, the Referendum Party agent in Putney, south-west London, to carry out promotion work allegedly described as "canvassing".

According to the newspaper, Ms Blacker, in whose constituency Sir James is to stand as a candidate, told an undercover journalist not to tell anyone that he was being paid for canvassing.

In a secretly taped conversation, she reportedly said: "It's our word against theirs."

Under the 1983 Representation of the People Act, it is illegal to pay someone to canvass on behalf of an election candidate. It is not against the law to be paid for general party work.

The penalty for paying canvassers is a fine of up to £5,000 and a five-year ban on being allowed to vote.

The Express's Deputy Editor Tessa Hilton said they would defend the action fully: "It is rather depressing that the Referendum Party, whose slogan, after all, is 'Let the people speak', should act against a newspaper bringing an issue as important as this to public attention."

"We are confident that our account of procedures of the

Referendum Party in Putney, the chosen seat of Sir James Goldsmith, deserve full scrutiny."

The Tory party chairman Brian Mawhinney said there should be an investigation into the claims.

Ms Blacker, aged 40, who was said by workers at the Referendum Party office near Putney Bridge to be unavailable for comment, spent 12 years as the Conservative agent for Kensington. She joined Sir James' party last year.

In 1989, she helped steer the Tories to a rare by-election victory when Dudley Fishburn was elected. According to former colleagues, Ms Blacker, whose sister, Lulu, is a friend of the Duchess of York, had already established a formidable reputation as a blunt speaker.

One said: "She is a domineering character who says exactly what she thinks. If she disagreed with someone at a meeting with senior officials at Central Office, she was liable to say 'That's bollocks'."

## significant shorts

### SNP takes ITV to court over debate exclusion

The Scottish Nationalist Party will take ITV to court today for excluding Alex Salmond, the SNP leader, from any televised debate between John Major and Tony Blair.

The SNP said it would seek an interim interdict that would ban the screening in Scotland of a programme excluding the party, and added it had set both the BBC and ITV a deadline of today to respond to its concerns. While the BBC had not yet replied, ITV had sent a flat rejection.

Negotiations continued yesterday between ITV, the BBC and the three main political parties in an effort to agree a format for a televised debate between the party leaders. The broadcasters' negotiations are being led by Marion Bowman, ITV's deputy controller of factual programmes and Tony Hall, chief executive of BBC News.

Paul McCann

### Redwood cancels book launch

John Redwood, the former Cabinet minister and Conservative leadership challenger, has been forced to cancel the launch of his book on the single currency after accusations that it would form an alternative manifesto for his party.

Although there will not now be a press conference to mark the book's publication, it is available in the shops. Mr Redwood's opposition to a single currency contradicts his party's official stance, which is that Britain should "negotiate and decide".

# Chez nous: a designer peek behind Blair's Islington curtains

Jojo Moyes

Tony Blair is a conservative – not really because of his politics; more the way he and Cherie furnish their sitting room.

Close examination of a photograph of the Labour leader at home in Islington, north London, reveal him, according to interior design experts, as "dated", "not very thrusting" and "conservative".

Caroline Atkins, editor of *House Beautiful* magazine, judged the Blair home to be "surprisingly conservative". "Crystal chandelier, pleated curtain pelmets – it's terribly formal and rather unlively in," she said.

It was evidently not the kind of home she had expected of the

young father. "I hope he has some fun somewhere – I envisage a big family kitchen with a scrubbed pine table and lots of Islington clutter, but I suspect Cherie's locked him in here until he gets his TV presentation finished."

Sarah Bravo, deputy editor of *Ideal Home* magazine, said that room "lacks warmth and personality". "There is nothing in the room that makes a statement one way or another ... the only personal touches are a collection of photographs, but even these seem to have been strategically styled."

Most scathing was Tyler Brule, editor of *Wallpaper*, Britain's trendiest new interiors magazine. "I think that a new Labour government would def-

initely have to establish a Ministry for the interior," he said.

Given that Labour was a party leading us into the next millennium, he said, it was "rather backwards looking" in terms of what he thought may have been a publicity "set". "I thought the Labour Party would have gone for something rather more dynamic in its approach," he said. "Those pelmets and fabrics are so traditional – but perhaps this is a comfort to dyed-in-the-wool Conservative voters."

Just as Labour's accusers say the original Mr Blair has been spin-doctored and air-brushed out of existence, so his home appears so determined not to offend that, according to one design specialist, it resembles a hotel foyer.

Lizzie O'Prey, deputy editor of *Inspirations* magazine "for upmarket, creative homes", said the Labour leader's room appeared "rather like a show home – somewhere that has been designed for display, rather than as a comfortable

home". She said it felt "quite dated and a bit ostentatious. Crystal chandelier lighting is all well and good in the foyer of the Hyde Park Hotel but over the top for a family home".

Perhaps Mr Blair was determined to avoid charges of elitism: "The fabric overcloth and glass tabletop – it's the sort of furniture you'll find in the show home at Barritt's," Ms O'Prey said.

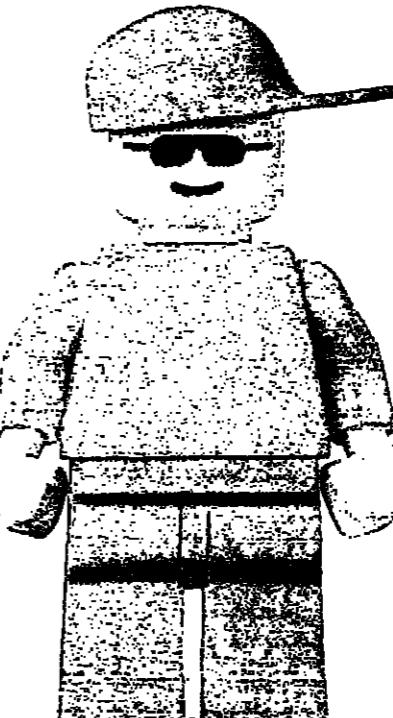
Still, in the world of interior design, just as in the world of politics, there is no pleasing everybody.

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Surrender: Zairean government soldiers standing in line in Kisangani yesterday waiting to turn themselves over to rebels

Photograph: Reuters

## British commandoes stand by to pull Westerners out of Zaire

Christopher Bellamy

Defence Correspondent

British special forces, including members of the Royal Marines' Special Boat Service, are among about 2,000 western troops waiting in the wings to pull Western civilians out of Zaire if the situation there deteriorates further.

The SBS - seaborne commandoes - are less well-known than the Army's SAS but operate in even more hostile conditions, as canoeists and frogmen on enemy coasts, delivered to their targets by ships and submarines.

It was the SBS, not the SAS, who carried out the first special-forces operation in the Gulf War, cutting the fibre-optic cable linking Saddam Hussein's

headquarters with his Scud-missile launch sites, just 40 miles from Baghdad. Paddy Asdown, the Liberal Democrat leader, is a former member of the SBS.

The British force at present is modest - about 15 specialists, providing reconnaissance and expertise in the use of specialist equipment.

An estimated 470 Britons are among Western foreigners still in Zaire. Diplomatic sources at the weekend said their advice to Western nationals was still at "phase one" level - do not go to Zaire unless you have to and leave unless it is imperative to stay. There are more stages: "get out" - by commercial means - and, finally, assisted evacuation, when no commercial means are available.

The main escape route from the capital, Kinshasa, is north across the Zaire river into Brazzaville. On the other side, about 1,200 French and 500 Belgian troops are waiting to help Western nationals to leave the country.

The French and the Belgians both have historical links with the country and their presence is also a reflection of a desire to maintain political influence, rather than a reflection of the number of their own nationals. The United States has several hundred troops in the area, but would play its biggest part by providing air transport.

The anti-government rebels, who control one-fifth of Zaire, say their forces are 100 miles from the southern mining cap-

ital of Lubumbashi and half that distance from the diamond-mining capital of Mbuji-Mayi. Johannesburg-based investment analyst John Klemmow told the news agency Reuters that the rebels were already offering gold prospecting concessions in parts of the country they control to foreign companies.

Laurent Kabila, the rebel leader, yesterday dispatched a senior aide to represent him in Togo at tomorrow's special Organisation of African Unity (OAU) summit on Zaire's civil war, officials said.

US and French envoys lobbied some 20 African countries to convince them to push for a ceasefire and talks at the summit, French officials said. But regional analysts doubted the success of the summit in the absence of Presidents Yoweri Mu-

seveni of Uganda and Pasteur Bizimungu of Rwanda, as well as Mr Kabila.

President Mobutu Sese Seko, back in Zaire after cancer treatment, has not said whether he will attend but his journey home on Friday left him so drained that he sent away an official welcoming committee and did not appear in public until Sunday.

State radio said that Mr Mobutu had "taken note" of a disputed vote by the transitional parliament to sack Prime Minister Kengo wa Dondo.

Supporters of veteran opposition leader Etienne Tshisekedi, who has long coveted the job, and even supporters of Mobutu and Kengo aides, said the veteran president's comments suggested that Kengo was finished as premier.

## Religious zealot who has turned Sudan into a pariah state

Mary Braid

Khartoum

Dr Hassan al-Turabi gazed out of his office window, above the point where the Blue and White Niles meet, and sniffed at the British colonial bridge which still traverses the river.

The religious guru, accused by the US of supporting Islamic terrorism, preferred to focus further upstream on the bridge being built by the Chinese.

To say Dr Turabi, speaker of the Sudanese parliament and leader of National Islamic Front (NIF), which seized power in Sudan seven years ago, was anti-British would be a momentous understatement. "We did not ask them to come here and massacre people," Dr Turabi said, referring to Kitchener's defeat of the Mahdist tribesmen a century ago at the Battle of Omdurman, which led to British-Egyptian rule in Sudan until independence in 1956.

In his opulent office, where engraved Islamic texts sit alongside mounted models of bullets, Dr Turabi says Britain hardly invests in Sudan any more. He looks beyond the obvious - like the NIF's alleged links with terrorists - for reasons, and argues that the British, like the Egyptians, are jealous of the former colony's success.

It is hard to see how, despite Dr Turabi's upbeat assertions, Sudan could hardly be in worse shape.

The Islamic Arab north has been at war with the African Christian and animist south for 30 of the past 40 years. The war has claimed millions of lives and is estimated to be costing \$1m (£625,000) a day.

Sudan could do with friends but in the seven years since the NIF manipulated itself into power - immediately banning all political parties - Sudan has become one of the loneliest countries on the planet. It is shunned by Arab countries for its support of Iraq during the Gulf War and for harbouring Islamist extremists. Egypt believes Sudan was involved in the 1995 assassination attempt on President Hosni Mubarak, and the country is virtually at war with Uganda, which it accuses of backing southern SPLA rebels.

Now its eastern neighbours, Eritrea and Ethiopia, worried by its expansionist rhetoric, have given refuge to Dr Turabi's brother-in-law and former prime minister Sadiq al Mahdi, who fled Khartoum. Mr Mahdi, great grandson of the original 19th century leader and head of the National Democratic Alliance, shook the Turabi regime to its roots in January by launching the first joint attack on Sudan's eastern border by his northern opposition group and the SPLA.

An undclared international embargo, meanwhile, has dried foreign investment and aid to a trickle.

If Dr Turabi is feeling the heat, it does not show. He believes Sudan's Islamic govern-

ment is the logical conclusion of Dr Turabi's Islam. It occurred during the January attack in the east when an imam in camouflage fatigues, wielding an AK47, incited people in Khartoum to jihad. The call did bring considerable numbers out on to the street but the fervour was short-lived. Many Sudanese were offended by this fusion of politics and religion.

Dr Turabi is a comparatively relaxed Islamic country and its Muslim population is conducting a quiet but highly effective campaign to keep it that way.

Directives that men and women should not walk together and women cover themselves more completely are ignored. "They will never make their brand of Islam stick," says a Sudanese academic. "People are saying little but they stay away. The sheikhs are also silent. That is their statement."

The professor, like most government opponents, is too afraid to give his name. Khartoum is crawling with security police and up to 500 dissidents are estimated to be under arrest.

But in Dr Turabi's eyes there are no secret police or "ghost houses" where dissidents are tortured; there is only a "free country" and popular support for a government poised to realise Sudan's enormous potential.

He talks for two hours, desperate to display his knowledge

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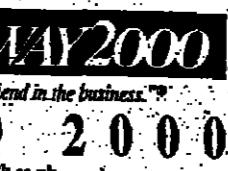
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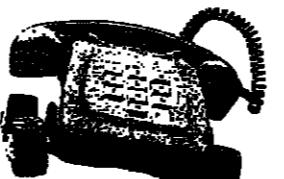
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# Forty years on, is the European train still running on track?

Flags and flowers set party wheels in motion as Rome celebrates the birth of a Union, writes Sarah Helm

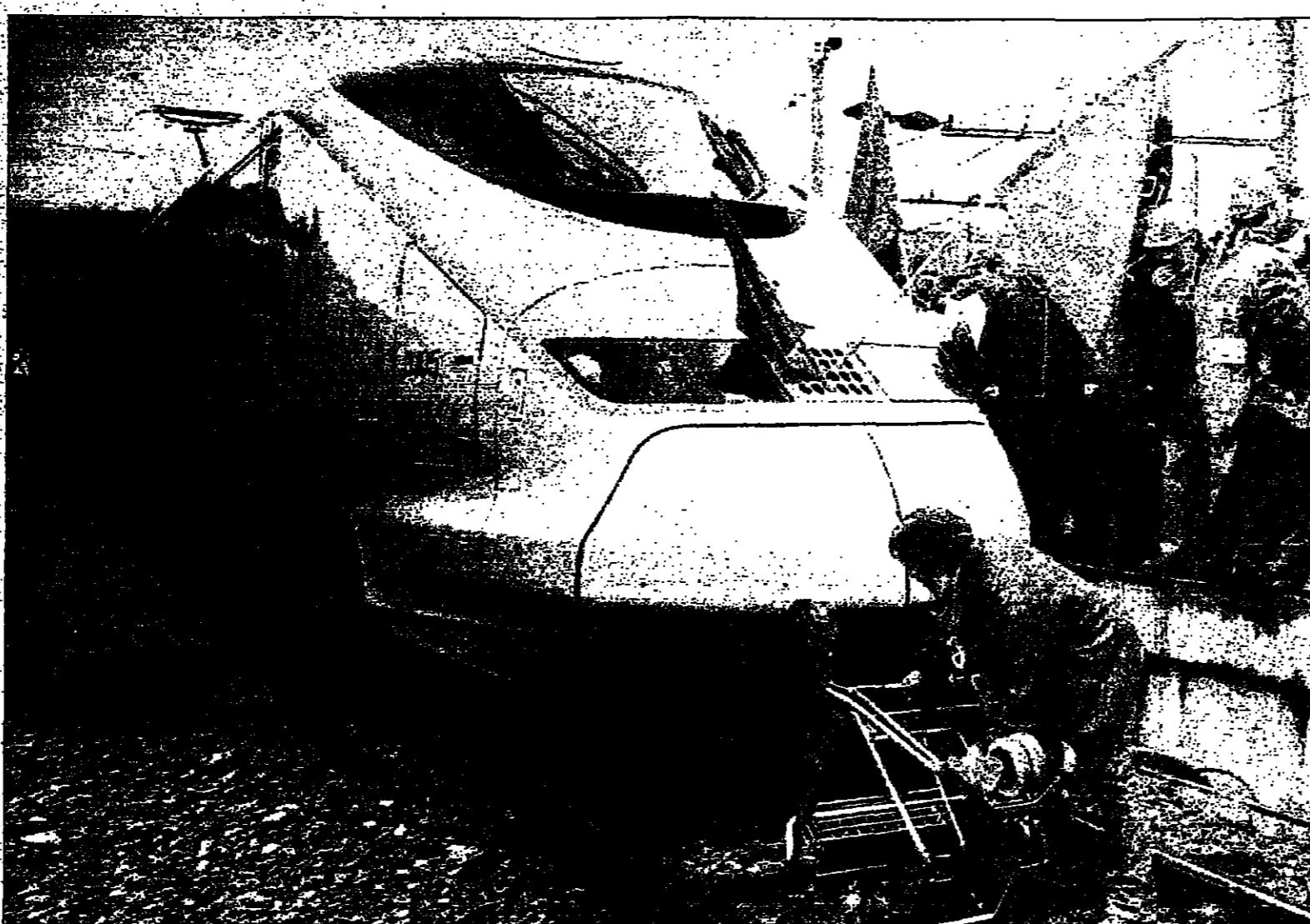
Flowerbeds in the Piazza Venezia have been laid with the colours of Europe and the Piazza Campidoglio has been decked with European flags.

The Municipal Police Force in Rome has been practising its 'rites for Europe' and a 'March for Europe' has been prepared by the association of *amici dell'Europa* - friends of Europe. Even the Pope, it seems, is joining in the fun. A short film entitled *Giovanni Paolo II in Europa* is to be shown in the Opera.

Rome is today celebrating a 40th birthday - the anniversary of the signing of the 'Treaty of Rome' - and the Italians are determined to stage the event in style. After all, Italy was one of the exclusive club of six which was here at the birth of the common market - or, as it is now, the European Union.

Particularly among those founding six - Germany, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg - nostalgia will no doubt hang heavy in the air as they look back to their early ideals and objectives. It was all about achieving peace, they will recall. The words of Jean Monnet, principal architect of the Treaty of Rome, who called for "the victory and vanquished of two world wars to exercise joint sovereignty over their joint resources" will no doubt be recalled. Self-congratulation is bound to ring out over the popping balloons. "Forty years of peace," Jacques Santer, the European Commission president was heard to proclaim yesterday before the celebrations had even begun. "Forty more years," they will all chant today.

And, of course, there will be the usual party jokes. "Remember how you Brits said the treaty stood no chance," the six will tease, referring to the scorn which the British poured upon the draft Rome treaty in 1955. "Monsieur le President, messieurs, au revoir et bonne chance," scoffed pipe-smoking



Staffed: A Belgian worker from Renault placing a trolley in front of the Brussels-London Eurostar yesterday, as a protest against the Vilvoorde plant closure, following unionist marches in the Belgian capital a week ago against rising job losses, inhumane firms and uncaring governments. Photograph: Reuters

Russell Bretherton, Britain's envoy to those treaty negotiations, before walking out and banging Britain's door against Europe for another 18 years.

Yet, like any 40th birthday, this one will be characterised not just by nostalgia and jollity, but also by soul-searching and self-doubt. Today's 15 member states are about to set out on another round of integration by signing the 'Treaty of Amsterdam' in June, and embarking on Economic and Monetary Union on 1 January 1999. The next round of enlargement, bringing in countries from east and central

Europe, is also about to begin. These events bring big change and big questions for Europe. And, as anyone who has had a 40th birthday knows, the biggest question of all is - what is it all for?

Václav Havel, President of the Czech Republic - an aspiring member - asked this question in particularly poignant terms during a recent address to the European Parliament. "I find," he said, "that Europe goes ahead with its unification if it has to rediscover, consciously embrace and in some way articulate its soul or its spirit, its underlying

idea, its purpose and its inner ethos ... and, finally, ascertain what its mission is."

Many of Europe's leaders would today still answer that mission is peace. But even among the founding six the old rhetoric rings hollow with ordinary people. Younger generations, who have forgotten the war, are no longer prepared to blindly follow the early ideals of Europe's founding fathers, and are asking tough questions about what economic benefits Europe will bring and what their stake is in its future.

Newer members largely

joined for economic reasons. The reluctant Danes, for example, were told that the European Union was about being able to sell butter and bacon. But, today, doubts about the economic aims of Europe are as deep as they ever have been. Rising unemployment and spending cuts are being blamed on efforts by member states to meet the criteria for economic and monetary union.

Since the end of the Cold War, enlargement has increasingly been offered as the new "mission" for the union. Bringing in the former Soviet bloc countries will give integration a form of moral underpinning, leaders hope.

The new draft treaty for Amsterdam proposes another possible new "mission". The EU should aim to create an area of "freedom, justice and security" says the document, in an effort to combat international crime, terrorism and drug trafficking.

All these new missions for Europe will no doubt be set out during the 40th anniversary. But the union appears to have little idea of how to communicate them to its "citizens".

Leading article, page 17

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## international

# Deadlock over Israeli security

**Patrick Cockburn**  
Jerusalem

The Palestinian leadership has rejected Israel's demand for security co-operation in the wake of the suicide bomb in Tel Aviv. Mohammed Dahlan, the head of the Palestine Security Service in Gaza, yesterday said: "We stopped the security activities and intelligence co-operation as a result of Israeli violations of the agreement by continuing to establish settlements."

Israel continues to accuse Yasser Arafat, the Palestinian leader, of giving a "green light" to suicide bombers by not arresting them. Hamas, the Islamic militant organisation, said it was giving "the mercy bullet" to the peace process.

Mr Dahlan said: "We will not accept or deal with Israeli conditions and will treat them as if they didn't exist."

Mr Arafat, who is on a nine-

day tour of east Asia, blames the recent increase in violence on the building of a new Jewish settlement in Jerusalem.

Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli Prime Minister, is trying to convince the outside world that it is Mr Arafat who is guilty of undermining the Oslo peace process, while his own hands are clean.

There was continuing rioting in Hebron and Bethlehem yes-

terday with 200 Palestinian police in Hebron forming a barrier to stop stone throwers attacking Israeli soldiers. General Moshe Yaalon, the head of Israeli military intelligence, said that Jibril Rajoub, the head of Preventive Security on the West bank, was fomenting the riots while pretending to rein in the rioters. Mr Rajoub said: "My guys were on the streets to try to control the situation."

The United States has so far refused to endorse Israel's allegation that Mr Arafat gave a green light for the suicide attack. Madeleine Albright, the US Secretary of State, said there was no proof the accusation was true. Israeli analysts suggest this neutral position is to balance the American veto of two UN Security Council resolutions condemning the building of the Jewish settlement at Har Homa. The US wants to retain some credibility as a mediator in the eyes of the Palestinians.

It is unclear what Mr Netanyahu will do if there is another suicide bombing. General Amnon Lipkin-Shahak, the chief of staff, says Israel does not want to reoccupy the Palestinian controlled enclaves, which would touch off a wider war. But if it does not it is left with few options for preventing another bombing. Mr Netanyahu would also find it difficult to compromise unless he did so in the context of forming a coalition government.

Middle East terror, page 19

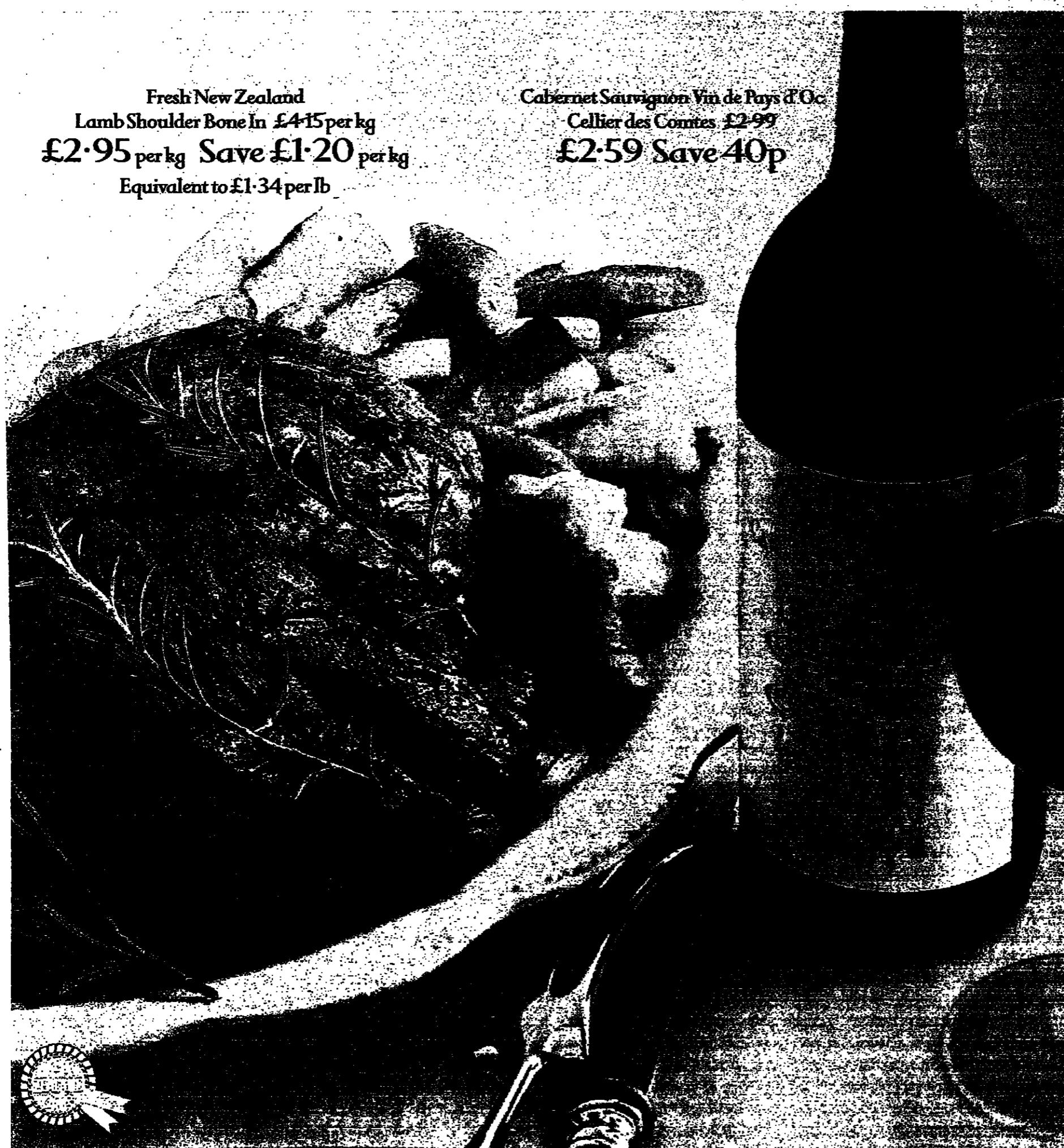


Breach of peace: A Palestinian policeman yesterday pushing an Arab protester away from Rachel's Tomb, a Jewish holy site in Bethlehem. Photograph: Reuters

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## Canberra kills off the world's first right-to-die legislation

**Robert MILLEN**  
Alice Springs

The world's first law allowing voluntary euthanasia was itself put to death last night, less than a year after its birth, when the Australian Senate voted to overturn the historic legislation.

The decision in the capital Canberra brought anger in the Northern Territory, Australia's most remote region, where the euthanasia law began operating last July after the territory's parliament narrowly passed the Rights of the Terminally Ill Act.

"We're seething with outrage," said Shane Stone, the territory's chief minister, whose administration presides over an area the size of Europe with less than 1 per cent of Australia's population.

The world's first law allowing doctors to end the lives of terminally ill people at their request has aroused a storm of controversy since it came into force. Four people have died under the law: Bob Dent, Janet Mills, Max Bell and a patient whose identity has remained private. All had terminal cancer.

Although opinion polls indicate that more than two-thirds of Australians support voluntary euthanasia, the House of Representatives in Canberra used its powers late last year to overturn the territory's law. It passed a bill sponsored by Kevin Andrews, a backbencher MP from the ruling Liberal Party, modifying the law. After a passionate debate over the past week, the Senate, the upper house of federal parliament, last night endorsed the Andrews' bill on a conscience vote by 38 votes to 33.

In the heat of the controversy, the moral, legal and medical issues surrounding euthanasia became obscured by arguments about states' rights. Mr Stone had voted against the euthanasia bill last year in Darwin, the territory's capital, but later lobbied federal MPs in Canberra, the national capital, not to overturn the law.

"I don't accept the principle of euthanasia..." he said. "But this issue now has gone beyond that to one of taking away the devolved powers of legislatures to pass the laws they want."

The federal parliament's vote consigns the euthanasia law to history, and ends the hopes of more terminally ill people who were said to be planning travelling to Darwin to use it. All four people who did die under the law were patients of Philip Nitschke, a Darwin doctor known as "Doctor Death" over his outspoken campaign in support of the law.

As the Senate last week began debating the Andrews' bill, a fifth patient, a British-born former nurse, 36, suffering from a rare cancer of the intestine, sent an emotional plea to Canberra calling on MPs to let the territory's law stand.

The woman, whose identity Dr Nitschke kept confidential, has lived in the territory for 15 years and has worked as a nurse

among Aboriginal communities. In a letter to MPs, the woman said: "The prospect of recurrent bowel obstruction, with the associated pain and indignity, is almost too much for me to contemplate. I plead with you, do not support the [federal] bill or at least call a referendum. Please listen to those of us who are terminally ill, and too sick and weak to argue."

"I do not want to end my life prematurely because of the timing of this vote. I will die soon, but please let me, and those other terminally ill people in my position, decide when."

Anti-euthanasia groups have waged a strong campaign in Canberra in the nine months since the territory's law started operating. Led by the Catholic church, the right-to-life movement and the Australian Medical Association, and arguing that no law should sanction the taking of human life, the anti-euthanasia lobby put strong pressure on federal MPs to intervene.

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The federal parliament's vote consigns the euthanasia law to history, and ends the hopes of more terminally ill people who were said to be planning travelling to Darwin to use it. All four people who did die under the law were patients of Philip Nitschke, a Darwin doctor known as "Doctor Death" over his outspoken campaign in support of the law.

As the Senate last week began debating the Andrews' bill, a fifth patient, a British-born former nurse, 36, suffering from a rare cancer of the intestine, sent an emotional plea to Canberra calling on MPs to let the territory's law stand.

The woman, whose identity Dr Nitschke kept confidential, has lived in the territory for 15 years and has worked as a nurse

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Hong Kong  handover

# Tycoons shift allegiance as Britain's power wanes

Stephen Vines  
Hong Kong

The trappings of power still surround the outgoing colonial administration but they are mere trappings. Understandably many people are asking: who will wield real power in the new order?

They are not inquiring about the status of Tung Chee-hwa, the Chief Executive, who will head the first post-colonial government, nor are they curious about his senior officials who, with just one exception, will be inherited from the old order. What they really want to know is who will be most influential from behind the scenes.

In the new Hong Kong the really influential people will be the big league businessmen. It is hardly a coincidence that Mr Tung himself is drawn from the ranks of the colony's leading tycoons and feels comfortable with those from a similar background. The Chinese leadership also feels relaxed in the company of these tycoons who pride themselves on pragmatism and are impatient with the niceties of democratic politics.

In recent years the tycoons have lost some ground to a new breed of elected politicians and professionals, but the big business bosses remained influential.

## China's army chief shown latest British weaponry

Christopher Bellamy  
Defence Correspondent  
and agencies

The head of China's 2-million-strong army met British defence bosses yesterday as part of a five-day tour of the United Kingdom aimed at warming up relations. The most significant encounter was with Michael Heseltine, the Deputy Prime Minister, suggesting that arms sales were on the agenda.

A European Union embargo on sales of arms to China has been in place since the Tiananmen Square massacre in 1989. But speculation is rising that the measure might be coming to an end. The Portuguese Defence Minister, Antonio Vitorino, said yesterday that the EU ban may be lifted soon, according to the Portuguese national news

agency Lusa. "It is natural that the issue [of arms sales] will have to be re-examined" since relations between China and the EU were being normalised, he said in Peking.

General Fu Qianyou, 66, China's Chief of General Staff, who heads the People's Liberation Army, also saw his opposite number, Field Marshal Sir Peter Inge, the Chief of Defence Staff; Jeremy Hanley, the Minister of State at the Foreign Office; and Michael Portillo, the Secretary of State for Defence.

General Fu's visit to Britain comes at the end of a European tour which has taken him to France, Belgium and Italy. He is the most senior defence representative from China to pay a full-scale visit to Britain since 1989. Chi Haotian, the Defence Minister, stopped over

briefly last December, en route to Washington. The Ministry of Defence also said that General Fu's visit was to reciprocate the hospitality extended to Field Marshal Inge when he visited China last November. In spite of its historic importance, the visit has been kept very low key.

Field Marshal Inge will retire in two weeks and sources said he was anxious that General Fu would visit before then. China is in the process of reducing its multi-million armed forces, and he was also anxious that General Fu should see a high-technology, well-trained, professional force, and to contrast this with the staged demonstrations which specially trained Chinese "court divisions" carry out for visitors.

Sources admitted that the

Chinese might be interested in Harrier jump jets although the EU embargo meant that the opportunities for using such visits as arms sales pitches were limited. Detailed arrangements for the handover of Hong Kong on 1 July were also discussed.

Today, General Fu heads for RAF Wittering in Cambridgeshire, to see demonstrations by the latest Harrier jump jets, and to the Permanent Joint Headquarters at Northwood, north-west London. Tomorrow he will visit Windsor Castle, the Defence Evaluation and Research Establishment experimental airfield at Boscombe Down, Hampshire, and the Royal School of Artillery at Larkhill, Wiltshire, where he will see Britain's latest quick-firing gun, the AS 90. He will also visit the naval base at Portsmouth.



Time running out: The Hong Kong stock exchange continues to make money for investors in the last months before Peking takes over the colony

Photograph: Tom Pilston

tal and acquired proxies drawn from this group of politicians. China, however, wanted to see the businessmen in the front ranks of the committees it established to prepare for the handover of power and so they were drawn back into the limelight.

Although it may not have been appreciated at the time the most important of the Chinese advisory committees was the first, set up in March 1992, after the constitution for the new Hong Kong had been drafted and China was getting down to the nuts and bolts of resuming sovereignty over Hong Kong. The main qualification for appointment seemed to be wealth.

Eighteen advisers in this committee were multi-millionaires, including Mr Tung who was then

the young and ambitious Vincent Lo, who made a fortune from property development by building on another made by his father, and Edgar Cheng, chairman of the stock exchange.

David Li was also among the group of most prominent turncoats who switched overnight from being cheer-leaders for the colonial regime to supporters of the new order. He was joined by the ambitious Nellie Fong, now a member of Mr Tung's cabinet. Maria Tam, a barrister, is another prominent member of this group. She was co-opted into the colonial government as something of a rebel, but quickly became one of its most loyal mouthpieces, helping to form a rather unsuccessful Peking political party.

Aside from Ms Tam, there were three other prominent

ship jumpers who had served on the Governor's Executive Council or cabinet. One is Sir Sze-yuen Chung, who was once the council's senior non-government member, and was recently appointed as the senior member of Mr Tung's cabinet.

Lo Tak-shing moved rather more quickly across the tracks to play a highly mischievous role in using his British background to warn the Chinese of all the dastardly tricks which he saw the British playing. The third is Rita Fan, who now presides over China's rival legislature.

More predictably, China be-

stowed membership on long-standing business supporters such as Henry Fok, who had helped China in breaking embargoes during the difficult period of the Korean war. Mr Fok is widely viewed as China's closest business ally, but there are others such as Tsui Tsing-tong, who has close connections

with China's arms industry, and Tsang Hin-chi, the head of the Goldlion group with extensive retail interests in China.

Alongside the businessmen, Peking rewarded long-time supporters of the Chinese government, including trades unionists and professionals such as the

trades unionist Cheng Yiu-tong, the teacher Cheng Kai-nan and the veteran Xu Ximin. A magazine publisher who is sufficiently ancient and confident of his position not to fear making the occasional gesture to China's opponents.

An important inclusion in the

group was Leung Chun-ying (another Tung cabinet member), then just 37-years-old, but clearly marked for a key role in the new order. As a student Mr Leung had been associated with anti-colonial activities but this did not prevent him from studying in Britain nor from building

his early career as a surveyor by working for the British owned property consultants Jones Laing Wootton. He left to form his own successful property conglomerate. Mr Leung is widely regarded as next in line to be Chief Executive after Mr Tung retires.

Mr Tung may also be classified as a representative of "old" money, unlike Mr Li, and other appointees such as the film tycoon Sir Run Run Shaw and the construction billionaire Gordon Wu. Old money, which in Hong Kong can mean money passing from the first to the second generation, was repre-

sented in even greater numbers.

The old money group included the banker David Li, the

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As optimistic as can be,

about what a bunch of

wrinkled old dictators are

about to take over and send in the

same army that slaughtered its

own citizens in Tiananmen

Square.

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# Enough! Let the real battle be joined

What is this election campaign about? And is there any prospect of having the real questions asked, let alone answered? Yesterday Paddy Ashdown's battle bus set off on its tour of 100 constituencies, with the Liberal Democrat leader snoring disdainfully at Labour's wheeze of the day, a plan to drag recalcitrant kids into football stadiums after school, promising them a tussle on the turf if they manage to polish off their homework. Anyone who followed Tony Blair on his day out in Sheffield would have learnt that the Labour leader likes the Spice Girls, Oasis and Blur. The best the Tories could do for most of yesterday was to wag a sorry head at Labour's plans to restore some limited rights to trade union members.

Now, readers of this paper, like any one else, no doubt enjoy discovering that Tony Blair likes tunny, teasy bands more than grown-up ones, just as much as they enjoy peering into his living-room and admiring the ruched curtains and frilly-edged cushions. But we are a week into the election campaign (yes, you have nearly six whole weeks left to go!) and voters could be forgiven for feeling that the whole thing seems just a mite phoney.

So far the most substantial matters of comment – aside from the serious allegations of sleaze – include *The Sun's* decision to support Tony Blair, and the continuing palaver surround-

ing the on-off off-on television debate. Is it merely coincidence that these two events are entirely media-related? Could it be that the whole business of election campaigning is self-reflexive? Politicians arrange meaningless events for reporters and broadcasters to go along and write meaninglessly about them, conveniently locking the whole campaign into a closed spiral.

Well, although you might be forgiven for thinking that, it is not entirely true. The exclusion of useful argument also has a great deal to do with the desire of these particular politicians, at this particular moment, to avoid confronting the harder questions. A few examples will suffice.

Today is the 40th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Rome – a momentous event in our history, and in the history of Europe. The Treaty's ambitions live on in daily form. Indeed, for the past year we have legitimately been expecting a ding-dong debate the moment the campaign began about Britain's future in Europe. How naïve we were. The Conservatives desperately want to avoid discussing Europe as far as possible, since it merely highlights their divisions, and risks someone speaking out of line. Moreover, any Cabinet member uttering his or her own independent views on Europe is liable to be accused of campaigning in the post-election election for the Tory leadership.

Mr Blair, by contrast, could very easily conduct an interesting debate on Europe, and our future in it. But he would rather not, because he needs to sound sceptical with one audience (*The Sun's* leader writers and editors) while promising a committed European engagement to others (most of our business establishment).

Here's another example. Yesterday we reported (correctly, as will eventually become clear) that the Labour Party is considering how to close uneconomic hospitals and divert funds elsewhere in the health service. As it happens, this is an excellent plan. What happens? Chris Smith, Labour's health spokesman, responds with hot denials. Why? Because he is worried that the Tories will pounce on it. In fact, it took long enough, but eventually Central Office clicked, and called a press conference to claim that Labour was going to close a specific list of hospitals in sundry constituencies, and that they would be telling local voters all about it.

In other words, Labour ducked the argument, and the Tories twisted it. Now, isn't there something just typical going on there?

What else? Today readers of our front

page today learn that a close look at the Tory plans for the public finances over the next three years shows that the Conservatives are actually planning steep cuts in spending on education and training, along with cuts in Home Office-funded services, to cover growing social security costs. If Labour wins the election, it will have to find that money from somewhere. But does anyone dare talk about this in the open?

Anyone going about their daily business in the past few days will surely have had several conversations along the lines of, "oh, I'm bored with this already. I don't know how we'll manage six more weeks of it."

One reason, clearly, is that too many people have already decided that Labour is so far ahead, that the conclusion is foregone, and that therefore everything that happens between now and 30 April is so much wet flannel. That attitude enables politicians to approach the entire campaign in the spirit of evasion: all Labour's energy will go into avoiding mishaps. In reality, though, these first two weeks before Easter were always likely to have been an artificial campaign, taken only half-seriously because everyone knows that the British public's attention span for election campaigns is understandably and sensibly limited. It does not mean that anyone should allow the rest of the campaign to be conducted in this manner.

The best hope is that the Tories take their fight energetically but with a little honesty into the Labour camp, and that the rest of us look hard at Conservative plans, which we have mostly ignored as "unlikely to happen". So long as Mr Major is on his back foot, as he has been throughout the first week, neither of these things will happen. And that is why what the country needs right now is for the Conservative campaign to get into gear.

## Come clean about the soapbox

Readers have been writing in about the Prime Minister's soapbox. They point out that soap rarely comes in boxes, at least big ones, these days. Indeed, real soapboxes are about as hard to come across as Sopwith Camels, spats and wash-houses. So what is Mr Major really standing on? Was it knocked up specially or did it once contain some other, perhaps less homely and cleansing substance? Was it a case of neat Dutch courage? Or a live ferret box? Or a hamper from Fortnum's, sticky with comfort food? Or a hamper, come to that, from Harrods food hall? Mr Major, we are a bold, campaigning newspaper. We demand an answer.



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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Courts allow the abuse of patients

Sir: The decision of the President of the Family Division to starve a woman to death ("Legal confusion as coma woman allowed to die", 22 March) is disgraceful. It is one of a long line of cases in which the Family Division often encouraged by the Official Solicitor, has sanctioned abuses of defenceless patients. The Official Solicitor has been particularly active in urging courts to impose forced obstetric intervention on vulnerable pregnant women: the judges always agree.

Last year, Mr Justice Wall ordered that force could be used on a woman detained in a mental hospital, to impose an induced labour or a Caesarean. The Official Solicitor argued for the use of force on his own client under the Mental Health Act 1983. The judge's reasoning for this bizarre was that a Caesarean was treatment for the woman's mental disorder: a decision derided by many legal critics. This is the man who ordered an anorexic teenager to be locked up a few days ago.

What is particularly sinister is the anonymity afforded by the court to the hospital and the doctors in this latest case, as in so many others. If state hospitals want to kill or otherwise abuse their patients, they should be forced to bring their cases into open court, in the Queen's Bench Division. The patient should have independent, civil liberties lawyers acting for him or her: not the Official Solicitor. Then the abuses perpetrated by secretive family courts would grind to a halt.

BARBARA M. HEWSON  
Gray's Inn  
London WC1

Sir: Sheila Kitzinger ("A battle for control of women's bodies", 22 March) seems determined to perpetuate several myths of childbirth.

The impression she gives of nature as a perfect midwife is cruelly misguided. In "traditional culture", where the practice of obstructive neglect may be followed, complications of birth occur which in this country are rarely seen outside a textbook. The prevalence of permanent urinary incontinence following prolonged obstructed labour in such cultures (Ethiopia being a much published example) is high and should concern anyone dealing with the birth process.

She also continues to paint younger obstetricians (amongst whom I count myself) as a "deskilled" body, unable to turn a breech. I, and many of my colleagues of a similar age, have been turning breech babies around for years. Breech presentation is uncommon, however, and for her to suggest that we could have the Caesarean rate by practising it universally is wrong.

I think what she means is that we could have the Caesarean section rate amongst women with a breech, which is not the same at all. There have, furthermore, been no suitable randomised trials that have proven the case for or against Caesarean section for breech beyond reasonable doubt, although there has been a great deal written on the subject.

Mr J. ROBERTS MRCGP MRCOG  
Consultant Obstetrician and  
Gynaecologist  
Winton,  
Lincolnshire



### Unfair to Straw the 'deceiver'

Sir: Polly Toynbee ("Howard's dismal legacy – Straw's great opportunity", 20 March) really is very unfair to Jack Straw: for the second time she has sought to convey the impression in her column that he is trying to become Home Secretary by deceit.

We have also recently outlined our proposals to insist in future – where a closure of a hospital or facility is suggested – that a public local hearing should be held, akin to a public inquiry, to give the local community the opportunity to examine those putting forward any such proposal.

We have of course said that in government we will want to look at streamlining bureaucracy hierarchies in hospital trusts in order to release money to be spent on patient care.

This does not however entail the closures of sites and facilities. Your reporter appears to have confused the two issues.

CHRIS SHADWELL MP  
Shadow Secretary of State for  
Health  
House of Commons

■ The Editor writes: The *Independent* stands by its report.

Sir: Paddy Ashdown must be included in the election TV debate.

Excluding Greater London, in the area south of Hereford/Northants/Leicestershire, the Liberal Democrats were placed second to the Conservatives in the 1992 election. They polled half a million more votes than Labour, and were placed first or second in

the poll in 112 constituencies, compared to 72 for Labour.

Tony Blair is an irrelevancy in my constituency of Bournemouth East as well as in 150 other seats, but the Liberal Democrats can give their electorates a real alternative to the Conservatives.

On 1 May we will all cast just one vote for an MP, none for a prime minister. Comparison with American presidential elections is wrong. Margaret Thatcher was Prime Minister in 1987, but the Conservative MPs replaced her in 1990 without any reference to voters.

R. A. SAUNDERS  
Bournemouth,  
Dorset

Sir: If the Tories wish to restrict the role in the planned televised debates of the Liberal Democrats, who are third in the polls, are they willing to accept that in Scotland, the debate should be between Labour and the Scottish National Party, first and second respectively, with the Tories as onlookers?

WILLIAM IVORY  
Edinburgh

Sir: What a happy land Powys must be ("Union history belies Blair's fairy tale", Letters, 24 March).

Presumably they did not suffer the poll tax and the ensuing unrest, negative equity has not reared its ugly head, unemployment has not exceeded 4 million and graduates can obtain jobs commensurate with their qualifications.

STEPHEN TOWLER  
Leeds

### 'Crash' and the disabled

Sir: Thomas Sutcliffe (Tabloid, 20 March) makes assertions about the British Board of Film Classification's screening of *Crash* for the disabled that are factually incorrect and rooted in a patronising attitude towards us, the disabled.

As the disabled co-ordinator of the screening for the disabled, I not only instigated the idea of the screening, but the "disabled" went to the BBFC, not vice versa – but was responsible for which disabled people attended the screening. On that basis alone it is unfair to accuse James Ferman of an act of tactical protection, as I am in no way connected to the BBFC.

Ferman is to be commended for his inclusive attitude not condemned.

The reason the BBFC accepted my offer of critical advice on the disability imagery in *Crash* was that the disability imagery in it was given as the number one reason by Westminster City Council when they banned it – to ask us as experts for an opinion was logical (and brave).

Sutcliffe is also wrong to assert that the disabled audience was "presumably a cross section of society" and that they were "unoffended". We were far from an average cross-section of society – if anything, we were a little too like Sutcliffe himself (white middle-class liberals). The audience was chosen with regard to their specialist knowledge about

disability, film and media processes; a combination of film critics, theorists, film-makers and performers, and experienced journalists. Equally, we had degrees and/or media-relevant postgraduate qualifications.

On the issue of being "unoffended", I think it is safe to say that most of the audience were "offended" to some degree: but isn't that the point of the film? Of the group in attendance only one person thought the film was of any artistic merit (me).

PAUL ANTHONY DARKE  
Wolverhampton

Sir: Breast-feeding is an absolutely natural act (letters, 19, 20, 21, 22 March). So are defecating, urinating and copulating. In certain parts of the world, witnessing any or all of these normal functions might be neither extraordinary nor offensive but, for example, in the UK a man openly urinating in public would be liable to arrest.

According to custom there are some things best done in private. Equally, persons blessed with common sense will appreciate that this is not always possible. To time and place, however, might also be added manner: if discretion is at least attempted, it will normally allow each party to respect the other's situation.

JOHN COLLIER  
Horton-in-Craven, North Yorkshire

### MEPs must reveal all

Sir: The MEPs' register of interests is not voluntary. It never has been as Sarah Helm claims ("Pleasure palace for our MEPs", 19 March). Since July 1996, when it was tightened up, it has become tougher and more transparent than the House of Commons register.

Members must declare, "any support, whether financial or in terms of staff or material, additional to that provided by Parliament and granted to the Member in connection with his political activities by third parties, whose identity shall be disclosed. Members of Parliament shall refrain from accepting any other gift or benefit in the performance of their duties."

GLYN FORD MEP  
(Greater Manchester East, Lab)  
Brussels

### Dap or tamp

Sir: Growing up in the west Monmouthshire valleys, I knew only "daps". Arriving as an 11-year-old new boy at an east Monmouthshire school, I was told to collect my "pumps". The schoolmaster misread my confusion for insubordination. He was furious – or, as Frank Harris-Jones (letter, 20 March) would understand, "tamping mad".

Professor RICHARD CARWARDINE  
Sheffield

Post letters to Letters to the Editor, and include a daytime telephone number. Fax: 0171-293 2056. E-mail: letters@independent.co.uk. E-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address. Letters may be edited for length and clarity. We regret we are unable to acknowledge unpublished letters.

## first person

# Inside America's dying rooms

**Award-winning novelist Joan Brady gives a personal account of her chronically ill husband's treatment in a "warehouse for the dying". Nobody would publish her story**

**H**ow do you warn people when what you are warning them about is so terrible that they shut their ears rather than listen? Even though the risk is to themselves? Even though, if they are quick, they can still avoid it? The health-care scandal I stumbled across is like this.

I did not do my stumbling in some Third World backwater either. The atrocity I saw - I am afraid atrocity is the right word - I saw in the United States, the most technologically advanced nation on earth. And I can see the beginnings of it here in Britain.

The story starts as a personal one. I married a writer called Dexter Masters, who was 32 years older than I. He became ill in Devon, where we had lived for many years. His opening complaints to our local doctor were an odd dizziness and an enlarged prostate, which, like so many men, he refused to do anything about. A scan in Plymouth showed some shrinkage of the brain; our GP explained as gently as he could that the dizziness would get worse.

"You'll stay for a while on a plateau," he said, "then there's a drop from which you'll recover - a plateau again but not quite up to where you were before. Then another drop". With his hand he traced out a bumpy, downward path. "Like that," he said.

And so it was. Within two years I had a profoundly disabled man to care for. I took him to the United States for treatment because he had Medicare coverage - the US government insurance scheme for the elderly.

I assumed, as so many lay people do, that, bettering his health was only a matter of getting him the right kind of attention. I was wrong. He was dying, and there was little anybody could do. But the US hospital was happy to take him in. Then, when he had been there less than a week - the scheduled prostate surgery had not yet taken place - they told me his time was nearly up. He was going to have to leave.

"Where's he supposed to go?" I asked.

"To a nursing home," they said.

A nursing home in Britain is not quite the same as its US

counterpart - not yet anyway. The US institution performs two functions. One is familiar: overseeing elderly patients who have a protected environment. The second function is largely unknown here: tending an enormous and growing population of what are called "total care patients". I was not sure what "total care" meant, except that it was bad and Dexter was approaching it.

What you read below is a gentle version of what I saw. The real situation is too shocking for publication in any form, fiction or non-fiction. I know. I wrote a fully researched, non-fiction study of the subject. Nobody would publish it, not as I wrote it, not with a view to a rewrite, not in any form whatever, not in the US - and not here either.

No American publisher will risk even *Death Comes for Peter Pan*, my novel in which the scandal plays the relatively minor role of thriller plot in a love story. What I saw and wrote about are warehouses for the dying. This reality constitutes a fate so ferocious that one California state inspector, seeing these places for the first time - he was

a survivor of the Auschwitz death camp 50 years ago - cried out: "This is America! You can't do this here".

**I**t is the smell that hits you first. The urine is easy to identify; patients are all doubly incontinent. The other component of the smell is catabolism, the decay of living tissue. Patients, without exception, have massive bedsores. They are literally rotting alive.

To look at, they are as alike as clones, room after room of them. Their necks are arched back. Their faces are grey. Their mouths are open. They have tubes in their noses that feed directly into their stomachs. Their arms and legs are retracted into a foetal position. You cannot even tell their sex. There is no sound, no movement from any of them.

The US government pays for this treatment, advertising it in official literature as "hospice-type care". The more pragmatic nursing-home trade calls such words "produce departments". This is a *double entendre*. A produce department is where a supermarket keeps its vegetables. Also, these patients produce "something" money. Their beds cost no more than a bed in a motel, a tenth the price of a hospital bed. Government savings are formidable. Hospital corporations do even better. In the past 10 years, literally millions of Americans have died under these conditions; nursing homes make huge profits.

Staff costs are minimal. Workers are predominantly untrained and from the bottom rungs of the labour pool; four-fifths of the

work falls to them, including the insertion of catheters and nasogastric tubes. Wages are very low. Understaffing is the rule. No workers are banned, no matter what their records.

Inflating

costs by as much as 2000 per cent is routine. The government pays separately for treating the large, multiple bedsores as well as for catheters, tubing and all medicines.

Falsification of records is routine. Misappropriation of pensions is routine. Theft of personal items is routine. So is theft of patients' medication, especially morphine, later to be sold on the street. There is even a street price for the keys to drug-stocked nursing-home medicine cabinets.

A shrewd operator can make a profit of up to 85 per cent. Why does nobody complain?

The patients cannot. They are unable to shift in their beds, much less speak out. Their families are afraid of them as well as of what is happening to them. People joke about the American fear of death, but it is real. When my husband lay dying, a nurse said to me, "I can't get most families to the door of a dying person's room - much less the bedside". Families do not complain.

Doctors hate nursing homes.

Many write prescriptions and sign death certificates sitting in their cars outside. Laws in states vary, but in Illinois, for example, a doctor can write a death certificate six months after his last visit to a patient. Patients rarely live more than six weeks in these wards.

The state inspectorate, the

watchdog that citizens should be

able to rely on, is as understaffed, ill-paid and corrupt as the nursing homes themselves. Inspections are signalled in advance. If a "deficiency" comes to light, an operator need only show compliance the next time around.

Cases of abuse rarely come to court. Suppose a nursing home were closed down; the local hospital would have to take on an entire ward of patients - at 10 times the cost to the government.

Here in Britain, it is still cheaper to let the dying die in peace. But there are signs of a change. The American administrative techniques of Prospective Payment and Diagnosis Related Groups - the techniques that lead to dying rooms - already have a foothold in British medical care.

Let me explain the two terms. Prospective payment is rationing by means of an elaborate system of fixed prices, paid in advance of treatment rather than after it. It is an estimate of costs, such as a builder might make for repairs. If the work costs more, the builder has to cover it; if less, the builder makes a profit. You can haggle with a builder. There is no room for haggling here.

Prices are fixed nationwide, precisely as Russian prices were fixed in the Soviet days of central planning. Prospective payment divides all human illness into some 470 categories; these are the Diagnosis Related Groups. Every human ailment and every known surgical procedure fits into one group or another, but no patient can be treated under more than one.

Each group carries a government-set price tag worked out by

computer programmes according to cost of care.

"Remarkable," one doctor said to me, "especially as nobody can cure most of these conditions".

US patients who use up whatever hospital days their ration allows them are by definition no longer "acute". Dexter's Prostectomy with Complications (the complications, mad as it sounds, included his brain condition) gave him 5.8 days. No more. But such patients are often too ill to go home.

My local doctor, the same man who treated Dexter here in Devon, told me that US companies owned five nursing homes locally. And whatever else such companies are, they are not charitable institutions.

Put these facts together with the endless NHS cuts and the acceleration towards private medicine and a profit motive, and what emerges is a *disaster* route to the US system.

Remember too that Britain is even less well regulated than the poorly regulated US; it is already a test ground for American researchers who want to experiment with patients in ways the US government will not allow.

So who is to say there are obstacles to US corporations providing the British government with the same cheap - and wonderfully profitable - "hospice-type care" they provide at home? All that is missing is that famous Yankee know-how. Myself, I would bet plans are well under way.

But let me return to the UK. Such aspects of the NHS as competitive bids for surgical operations are direct applications of the idea of prospective payment. Private medical insurers have used Diagnosis Related Groups to gauge some of their costs for years. So the ideas are not new.

Now for official sanction. On 12 August 1994, the UK announced guidelines that for the first time allow NHS hospitals

to evict patients to nursing homes. These evictions follow the same methods and ground rules as US evictions to dying rooms - the largely meaningless and easily manipulated distinction between "acute" and "non-acute" care.

And the fate of evicted British patients in the near future? This is where it gets really scary. Five years, American hospital corporations have been buying into British hospitals and nursing homes.

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*Death Comes for Peter Pan* (Secker and Warburg, £15.99) is among the nominations for this year's Orange Fiction Prize

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## The revenge of the Easter cormorants

**E**aster is nearly here and that means a lot of you city-dwellers will feel a strange compulsion to get out of town for a few days and come down to where we country-dwellers have been getting the place ready for you. So, just in case you have forgotten all the spring sights, here's a check-list of what nature will have to offer you this Easteride!

**Cormorants**  
Until very recently it was unheard of for cormorants to be seen inland, but over the last year or two these big, black, slow-flapping birds have been spotted flapping slowly, and bigly, and blackly, down our inland valleys, darkening the sun and bringing terror to small children whose mothers have said, "If you don't do your homework instead of playing Sega games, and help around the house, and give up all those clandestine drugs, the cormorant will come and get you". Apparently they are cormorants from Hong Kong harbour who have been told to get out by the end of 1997 and most of them have come here on false passports.

**Riff-raff**  
Right now the hedgerows are full of small immigrant birds hiding from the authorities. These birds, which are small, brown, featureless and totally invisible, are collectively

the country - some of us have never heard of the Spice Girls and the rest wish we hadn't - but who has slowly dawned on us that there is something called a comet in the sky, which we would do well to go out and look at. This is for two reasons: one, it won't be coming back again in our lifetime and, two, apparently they can't see it very well in London.

There's always a great temptation to take advantage of things they can't do in London, so we've all been standing around after sunset, saying things like: "Look, that's the comet, the one they can't see in London".

"No, it's not, it's the Longs' security lights, let's ask them to turn it off", and "Well, they can't see the Longs' lights in London either". So if you come across knots of standbys-in the dark lanes this Easter, don't run them over: they're only country people who have left it rather late and still haven't had a look at the comet.

**Cormorants (pt 2)**  
It has been brought to my attention since the start of this article that the cormorants which are increasingly turning up inland are not refugees from Hong Kong but from our own shorelines. It appears that fishermen have been making our country roads a site for sore eyes. Already the smaller rural towns are bright with posters saying that enough is enough and other witty city comments, and already wise country

arming themselves and training in the hills for a revenge campaign against the fishermen.

**Second-hand nests**  
It is already nearing the end of the nesting-hatching-and-fledging season down here, which means two things: one, a lot of baby birds flying very carelessly and dangerously on the wrong side of the sky, and two, a lot of empty nests suddenly coming on the market.

**Miles**  
**Kington**  
known as riff-raff, and can be recognised by their distinctive call of "Riff raff raff". If you see one, do not have a go.

**Cormorants (pt 3)**  
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folk are saying, "If they want to impress us with their management of the economy, why are they wasting all this money on mucking up the place with these bloody ads?" Watch out for the different colours of the posters in the hedgerow and their different slogans - blue, with "If it ain't broke, we'll make it bankrupt for you", orange with "Not just a tactical vote" and red with "Your nearest Labour MP is only 100 miles away". Down here they are asking the meaningful question: "Why does Mr Blair's face only occur on Tory posters, and Mr Major's only on Labour?" but they aren't getting any answers.

**Cormorants (pt 4)**  
The revenge campaign may have started already (see Cormorants pt 2). A friend of mine says he passed an angler on the canal bank the other day, hunched up and grumpy as all anglers are, but when he passed he realised it was not an ordinary fisherman - it was a cormorant sitting on a folding stool with a small rod, puffing at a Benson and Hedges, and when he stopped, the cormorant turned and snarled at him.

**Election posters**  
At the moment the countryside is election-free, but very soon gaily coloured leaflets and placards will be making our country roads a site for sore eyes. Already the smaller rural towns are bright with posters saying that enough is enough and other witty city comments, and already wise country



Miles Kington

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News travels slowly down in

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## The Tory message gets a little help from Super Mac

There was a glimpse yesterday of a different, older, grander Conservatism. The bright young suits at Central Office admit freely to having echoed their predecessors of a generation ago with a souped-up version of the slogan which helped Harold Macmillan to a landslide in 1959. "Britain is booming. Don't let Labour blow it," is a conscious translation into Saaachi-ese of "Life's better under the Conservatives. Don't let Labour ruin it."

The 1997 slogan is not risk-free. It uses a dangerous word: research shows that some voters, invited to free associate about the word "boom" in the manner of TV game shows, automatically come up with "bust". It requires the same electors who were told that the recession was caused by world factors beyond the control of the British government to believe that the recovery is entirely of that same government's making. It starkly exposes the fact that the tax argument isn't what it was in 1992: the Tories cannot promise to reduce the overall tax burden in the lifetime of the next Parliament any more than Labour can. And it gambles against the belief held by some in the Labour Party, that electors are more inclined to opt for a party associated with redistribution at times of economic recovery than at times of depression.

The theme, unveiled at yesterday's Conservative press conference, nevertheless reflects a final and necessary effort by two of the party's biggest performers, Kenneth Clarke and Michael Heseltine, to turn real economic optimism into votes. The Tory campaign lost a week thanks to well-founded allegations of bribery (let's use the word: "sleaze") against several Tory MPs, and the catastrophic part played by the election timing in suppressing the official report which will document it. The antics of John Redwood, the one candidate for the post-Major party leadership who is free from the burdens of Cabinet responsibility, and who this week publishes a book in defiance of his own Chief Whip, denouncing the single currency, shows how the party's divisions on Europe could yet lose it another.

It may be the Tories' own fault, but Mr Major is having difficulty getting his message – especially his economic message – across. This strange circumstance has two consequences. One is to dispel any doubts about the indispensability of Ken Clarke to the Tory campaign if they are to have the slightest chance of winning.

He is at once the most written-off leadership candidate in his own party and the most feared by the Opposition. Those who revile him for being prepared to contemplate forfeiting the politician's right to fix interest rates and second-guess the advice of central bankers scarcely pause to give him credit for his success in exercising just that right. He was at his



Donald Macintyre

The trouble for the Tories is that in most people's minds the word that follows Boom is Bust.

it all went wrong (for Lord Lundy, that is): "The stocks were sold, the press was squared / The middle classes quite prepared." And in those circumstances every chance of reaching an audience of 15 million suddenly looks irresistible, almost whatever the risks.

This shift is quite recent. Central Office were initially much keener than some of Mr Major's immediate advisers on the idea. Even 10 days ago, when the Prime Minister was first said to be ready for a debate, it wasn't clear how serious he was. Was the party merely preparing to blame the Liberal Democrats' objections to their preferred format (throwing Paddy Ashdown the sop of an add-on interview rather than making him "interactive" in a Blair/Major debate) for any collapse of the negotiations? Hints yesterday from the Tories' Michael Dobbs suggest that compromise with the Lib Dems on this point might be possible.

It can still easily go wrong. Labour is angry with the broadcasters, especially the BBC, for proposing a format which it claims was "tailor-made" for the Tories. Labour officials roll their eyes with assumed boredom when you raise the subject. There are at the very least shades of opinion within the party's hierarchy over whether the debate would serve any purpose given the party's dominant lead. The party is also agonising for a participating audience. But since Blair is officially said to want it, and since Labour called for it in the first place, there are risks in being anything other than accommodating. It's an innovation whose time has come. The debate has become an issue – and the party seen to stall it will pay a price.

## Shifting political loyalty is good news for the press

The end of party allegiances will leave Fleet Street more powerful



Andreas Whittam Smith

is what foreigners engage in, or Labour local authorities or perhaps even the City of London, but not Tory MPs sitting for constituencies with big Conservative majorities and thousands of *Telegraph* readers.

Thus on Thursday it produced a headline that will surely stand as the silliest of the election campaign: "Sleaze inquiry entangled in a web of detail".

In the same way that the mystifying utterances of schizophrenics can be decoded, so can this. By "sleaze inquiry" is meant Tory MPs and "detail" was a substitute for a word with a similar sound, "deceit". What *The Daily Telegraph* should have written, but could not bring itself to do, was "Tory MPs entangled in a web of deceit".

The next day came a further indication that the editorial mind had become a little disturbed. The headline of its leader commenting on Sir Gordon Downey's report was "Blair's cover-up".

*The Mirror* has had a different problem. As the only mass circulation newspaper supporting Labour consistently since *The Sun* was sold to Rupert Murdoch, it has always unabashedly and openly battled for the Labour Party during elections. That is what its readers have come to expect and its political stance has differentiated it from *The Sun*, whose more looks opportunistic rather than profound. The *Daily Mail*'s news coverage remains intermittently hostile to Labour and it will be a minor

miracle if *The Express* really has thrown off its Beaverbrook trappings even the City of London, but not Tory MPs sitting for constituencies with big Conservative majorities and thousands of *Telegraph* readers.

What began as an understandable preference for the Conservative Party in the face of intransigent printing unions led national newspapers to become extensions of the parties' election campaigns rather than observers of them. And this is still going on, though to a much lesser extent. *The Daily Telegraph*, for instance, is congenitally unable to come to terms with Tory sleaze. The notion makes the paper slightly mad. In the newspaper's universe, sleaze

is more potent than broadcast news during elections. Television and radio coverage, because it is simultaneously compressed and balanced, often loses all meaning. We learn, within a time slot measured in seconds, that party A has proposed something and that parties B and C, separately, think it is a mistake. Then the next item reverses the roles.

The form of election news is "statement/rebuttal/rebuttal".

Nothing is conveyed by this.

Newspapers do not and will not behave like that. As they leave their old party loyalties behind, and throw their weight around more freely, they will

find that they become more powerful rather than less.

So long as Labour was the political party of the trades unions, it was perfectly rational for newspaper owners to back the Conservatives. For until the

## Did Arafat give a green light to terror?

by Patrick Cockburn



The Palestinians say their security services are not a client militia and they will not restrain Hamas without a quid pro quo

security services were not a client militia, at Israel's beck and call. The message was that Mr Arafat is not going to restrain Hamas or other militant Islamic organisations unless there is a quid pro quo. This probably means that Mr Arafat wants from Mr Netanyahu what he would have got if Labour had won the last election: almost all the West Bank and a compromise on Jerusalem.

In one sense Mr Netanyahu and his military commanders are right. On his return from the US two weeks ago Mr

Arafat had a meeting with the leaders of Hamas in Gaza. They asked for the release of their members who were in jail at the height of the clampdown on Hamas last year. Mr Arafat was savagely repressed by Mr Netanyahu's security men, and ordinary Palestinians were again more bombs. After Har Homa this changed. Danny Rubenstein, an acute observer of Palestinian politics for the daily *Haaretz*, says: "It wasn't Arafat who gave Hamas the green light, but the broad public in the West Bank and Gaza, which urged Hamas to take action."

This means that the Palestinian leader's position is

the mainstream of Palestinian public opinion. Over the last year there were no suicide attacks for two reasons: Hamas was savagely repressed by Mr Arafat's security men, and ordinary Palestinians were again more bombs. After Har Homa this changed. Danny Rubenstein, an acute observer of Palestinian politics for the daily *Haaretz*, says: "It wasn't Arafat who gave Hamas the green light, but the broad public in the West Bank and Gaza, which urged Hamas to take action."

The previous Israeli government realised that they could not have their cake and eat it.

Mr Arafat was never going to be their tame policeman. Nor would he have lived very long if he had tried. Optimists in Jerusalem comfort themselves with the thought that Mr Netanyahu has no alternative to Oslo. They are probably right, but there is little sign that he knows that. Instead he has stopped the peace process at a fatal half-way house so neither Israel nor the Palestinians fully control the West Bank. And as friction between the two increases, the way has inevitably opened for the return of the suicide bomber.

## Who's the sleaziest one of all?

by William Hartston

Sir Gordon Downey may still be sifting through all the sleaze-soiled evidence in his trays, but Collins Dictionaries have already completed their own analysis, and it shows that sleaze – originally cheap cloth from Silesia – has been bought up wholesale by the world of politics. Thanks to the 325 million words that have built up since 1988 to form the Collins Bank of English, we can now list the 25 people, institutions and concepts that have been most frequently in contact with the growing tide of sleaze. And the only entries with no political affiliations are football and the Queen.

The items in the databank include both formal and informal texts, broadcast, published or spoken predominantly in the last two or three years. The words in the table have appeared most frequently either immediately next to the word "sleaze" or separated from it only by an insignificant word such as "the" or "and".

The word most frequently linked to "sleaze" is "allegations". In view of the libel laws, this is hardly surprising, but it is worth noting that if "Tories" (10th place) had been added to "Tory" (in second), they would almost certainly have overtaken it – though it would have been a close-run contest between "Tory" plus "Tories", compared with "allegations" plus "accusations".

"Downey" himself must now be making a late run from behind, but has failed to make the top 25 and clearly has a

### The 25 sleaziest words:

1. Allegations
2. Tory
3. Nofan
4. Scandal
5. Government
6. Political
7. Party
8. Labour
9. Inquiry
10. Tories
11. Factor
12. Row
13. Greed
14. Corruption
15. Sleaze
16. Scandals
17. Public
18. Incompetence
19. Accusations
20. Sex
21. Queen
22. Politics
23. Commons
24. Football
25. Major



## Albanian children face food crisis

Confusion and chaos are mounting in Albania. According to Albanian government reports, food stocks are down to a tenth of normal levels. Those least able to help themselves will, as ever, be most at risk. Children's hospitals and orphanages do not know where the next food supplies will come from.

UK charity Children's Aid Direct (formerly Feed the Children) has considerable experience of working in Albania and has a team on the ground. As soon as it is safe to deliver food and other urgently needed aid, this charity will make those deliveries. And they are appealing today for your help to do it.

A donation of £30 could buy enough high-protein food for 136 children. As the crisis deepens, Children's Aid Direct will be doing what they can – will you?

LET ME HELP BRING HOPE TO ALBANIA				
Here is my gift of:				
<input type="checkbox"/> £30	<input type="checkbox"/> £60	<input type="checkbox"/> £90	<input type="checkbox"/> £250*	<input type="checkbox"/> £_____ (other)
*A gift of £250 or more is worth almost an extra third to us under Gift Aid				
Please make your cheque payable to Children's Aid Direct OR				
Please debit £_____ from my <input type="checkbox"/> Visa <input type="checkbox"/> MasterCard <input type="checkbox"/> Switch				
CARD NUMBER _____				
Last three digits of Switch card no. <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Switch issue no. <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>				
EXPIRY DATE / SIGNATURE _____				
NAME (CAPS) MR/MRS/Ms _____				
ADDRESS _____				
POSTCODE _____				
TELEPHONE _____				
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Please send to: Children's Aid Direct				
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# business & city

Business news desk: tel 0171-238 2096 fax 0171-238 2098  
BUSINESS & CITY EDITOR: JEREMY WARNER

## Krupp-Thyssen truce sets stage for peaceful merger

Imre Karacs

Bonn

Germany's warring steel giants buried the hatchet last night and appeared to be on the verge of a merger on peaceful terms. If they succeed, the deal will create Europe's third-largest steel and engineering conglomerate.

After week-long talks mediated by business leaders and politicians, Krupp-Hoesch announced the withdrawal of its hostile takeover bid for Thyssen. Instead, both compa-

nies pledged to "explore possibilities for co-operation."

A merger between Krupp and Thyssen would create a formidable rival to British Steel, with combined annual sales of DM63bn. Krupp has said a full merger of the two companies would create cost savings in other areas as well, such as engineering and automotive components.

In a joint statement issued last night, the two rivals said their talks had gone well, and there was agreement that they had to find a solution ensuring the sur-

vival of the German steel industry. Further discussions were necessary to hammer out the details, particularly the crucial question of what role Krupp would have in the future alliance.

There was no word, either, on what this would mean to the 190,000 people currently employed by the two firms, but unions have warned that tens of thousands are in danger of being rationalised out of their jobs.

Thyssen's works council has called on some 50,000 workers to stage a protest today in

Frankfurt's banking district as top politicians, including Chancellor Helmut Kohl, called on both companies to show social responsibility.

"We are going to Frankfurt because we fear that our future cannot be helped by the democratically-elected government in Bonn but will instead be decided by the banks," said Georg Bonnen, the leader of the Thyssen works council.

Krupp, the smaller of the two firms, had been advised by its own market analysts that it could not survive

beyond the year 2000 on its current scale of operations. Repeated overtures to Thyssen had all been rebuffed, however, leaving no option but an almost unprecedented hostile bid.

The takeover attempt sparked spontaneous work stoppages by thousands of steel workers in the Ruhr, forcing the intervention of politicians.

Wolfgang Clement, the economics minister in the state of North Rhine-Westphalia where the two groups are based, said he expected a co-operation deal to be reached. Mr

Clement, a rising star in the Social Democratic Party, described the talks as very constructive. "I do not think the differences are dramatic," he added. "I want to see a merger in the end and not a hostile takeover."

Mr Clement's views were echoed by Hans-Olaf Henkel, president of the Federation of German Industry, who said he believed Krupp and Thyssen would find a way to unify their steel operations to remain competitive but avoid massive job losses.

"I would say a merger would be good for both companies, particularly in the long-term," Mr Henkel said. A study by Deutsche Bank, Dresdner Bank and Goldman Sachs showed a merger could bring positive results as early as spring 1998. According to the bankers' report, commissioned by Krupp at the cost of DM200m, both companies would be able to sell off a number of units and Krupp could repay the takeover debts by the year 2000.

As Frankfurt's business district braced for an invasion by

thousands of steel workers, the Deutsche Bank board member who played both sides in the Thyssen takeover battle hinted yesterday that he would soon resign from the steel-maker's supervisory board.

Ulrich Cartellieri was forced to issue a "personal statement" to defend himself against accusations of a conflict of interest. Mr Cartellieri had known about Krupp's hostile takeover bid prepared by his bank, but had failed to inform the company he was advising, Thyssen.

Comment, page 21

## Surprise trade boost for 'booming' UK

Diane Coyle

Economics Editor

The best balance of payments figures for a decade gave the Government more ammunition yesterday for its election campaign claim that "Britain is booming".

Kenneth Clarke said that yesterday's figures "show that this time we have healthy growth which is not running into the balance of payments problems which caused past booms to turn into bust".

City experts welcomed the unexpected good news on the trade front, but warned that the strong pound and booming demand meant Britain would go back into the red this year.

"If it lasted we could all feel a lot more optimistic about longer-term prospects for the British economy. But I would still be very wary about the balance of payments outlook," said Kevin Gardner, an economist at the investment bank Morgan Stanley.

Recent figures have pointed to an economy expanding faster than its long-run trend. In a rare display of unanimity, almost all City economists think interest rates will have to increase shortly after the election, especially if the US Federal Reserve raises rates across the Atlantic today.

Official statistics showed that a record surplus on "invisibles" – services, investment income and transfer payments – offset an increased deficit on trade in goods last year. The overall 1996 shortfall of £14m was the best performance since the oil-

related balance of payments surpluses of the early 1980s.

Trade in invisibles was in surplus by a record £12.5bn. The balance on services was little changed, with financial and business services the main surplus industries and travel, transport and aviation in deficit.

Business services provided the main improvement, up by £1.2bn to a surplus of £7.9bn.

Net income from British investments overseas surged, reflecting substantial profits.

**We have healthy growth which is not running into... problems which caused past booms to turn into bust**

– Kenneth Clarke

The value of new British investment abroad was about twice the value of foreign investment in the UK in 1995, the last year for which full figures are available.

Net direct investment earnings climbed to £13.7bn in 1996 from £11.6bn the previous year.

However, trade in goods was in the red by £12.3bn last year, although the deficit narrowed

slightly in the final quarter of the year thanks to lower import prices. A rising exchange rate tends to boost trade figures in the short run by making imports cheaper and exports dearer in sterling terms before the damage is done to export volumes.

John O'Sullivan at NatWest Markets said: "A strong pound and rising consumer demand should tip the UK back into deficit in 1997, but the erosion will occur from a relatively healthy starting point."

Separate figures yesterday showed that the economy had expanded by 0.8 per cent in the final quarter of last year, as originally estimated. Annual growth rate was nudged down to 2.6 per cent above the long-run trend.

The new estimates showed a revised composition of growth, with much less of an addition to stocks than the statisticians had first thought. Consumer spending was unrevised, while estimated investment spending was revised sharply higher.

"This will renew hopes that the long-awaited recovery in investment is finally upon us," said Jonathan Loynes, UK economist at HSBC Markets.

Although the pound rose slightly yesterday against both the dollar and Deutsche Mark, share prices fell. Despite a steady opening on Wall Street, the FTSE 100 index closed just off its intraday low, ending 40 points lower at 4,214.8.

The pound gained two pence, reaching DM2.7218. It rose by a cent to \$1.6135.

Hamish McRae, page 24

£1.6135



On the rise: Sales of luxury cars helped Sir Colin Marshall, chairman of Inchcape (left), and Philip Cushing, group chief executive, announce an increase in headline profits at year-end by 12 per cent to £165.1m

Photograph: Nicola Kurtz

## Ferrari factor powers Inchcape

Nigel Cope  
and Chris Hughes

Sales of Ferraris, those symbols of motoring extravagance, are booming in Britain and provide further evidence of a buoyant consumer economy.

Ferrari imports rose by 20 per cent last year according to Inchcape, the car distribution group.

It sold 300 of the high-performance sports cars in Britain compared to 250 in 1995. The prices range from £90,000 for a

run-of-the-mill F355 Berlinetta up to £350,000 for an F50 described by the company as the "ultimate dream machine".

Inchcape also said that sales of other top-of-the-range cars such as BMWs, Mercedes and Chrysler Cherokee jeeps were also buoyant.

"Only two years ago, the luxury end of the car industry was a real nightmare market. But the better economy is certainly a factor and we are finding that it is not just City workers

spending their bonuses that are behind the rise. They are accountants, lawyers, doctors as well as City advisers," the company said. Inchcape said the higher sales of Ferraris was also due to the car maker's decision to broaden the appeal of the cars.

The luxury car boom is just one of a series of indicators showing that higher-value products are selling well. Figures earlier this month from the Champagne Information Bu-

reau showed that champagne shipments to the UK were almost back to their level in the Eighties boom. British consumption of bubbly rose 18 per cent last year compared to the worldwide figure of 2.6 per cent.

Meanwhile Mappin & Webb, the jewellers, reported strong growth in sales of watch brands such as Rolex and Cartier and Trailfinders, the travel agents, said bookings to exotic destinations were growing strongly.

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## Share transfer leaves 'Toon Army' in the cold

Nigel Cope  
City Correspondent

Thousands of Newcastle United fans have missed out on their club's stock market flotation after its share issue was heavily over-subscribed by both institutional investors and season ticket-holders.

The flotation, which raises £50m to repay debts and fund a youth development policy, will also trigger bonuses for three Newcastle directors totalling more than £1m.

Disappointment for some 14,000 members of the so-called "Toon army" came as the Tyneside club revealed that chairman Sir John Hall had transferred control of his family's stake to his son Douglas.

A supplementary flotation prospectus showed that Douglas Hall will control 57 per cent of the club when shares start trad-

ing on 2 April. With the club valued at £193m, that stake will be worth £11m.

Mr Hall is an executive director of the club while Sir John does not have a seat on the board, even though he has bankrolled the club's renaissance and will remain chairman of the football club.

Newcastle United's chief executive, Mark Corbridge, denied the share transfer had been prompted by institutional pressure. He said Sir John had decided to make the transfer last week on his 64th birthday.

"Nobody here or in the City has suggested that any share transfer should take place," Mr Corbridge said. "It is a matter for the family."

Newcastle's shares were priced at a top-of-the-range £135p valuing the club at £193m. The retail offer was seven times over-subscribed, prompting the

## Microsoft share fall drags down Nasdaq

David Usborne  
New York

Further lubricating the recent downhill run of hi-tech stocks in New York, shares in Microsoft took a severe tumble yesterday following reports that its revised version of its Windows 95 operating system might be late in coming to the shops.

Apparently reacting to fears that the new Windows 95 would not be available until after the next Christmas shopping season, Microsoft saw its shares fall by more than 5 per cent in New York trading.

The deterioration in Microsoft's short-term prospects delivered another blow to the already fragile hi-tech sector. By midday yesterday, the technology-heavy Nasdaq exchange was down a significant 15 points.

Although the Nasdaq had been slipping through several trading sessions, Microsoft's troubles threatened a ripple effect with in-

vestors fearing negative consequences for the wider computer sector. Among stocks that were also hit yesterday were Intel, Hewlett Packard, Dell and IBM.

At lunch Microsoft was down 44c to \$89.40, leaving the company's stock at its lowest level since January. Microsoft was also the heaviest-traded stock on already nervous Nasdaq.

The decline in the Nasdaq added to wider unease on Wall Street as investors awaited today's meeting of the Federal Reserve's Open Market Committee. There is general anticipation that Fed chairman Alan Greenspan will finally nudge the committee to increase interest rates in the United States for the first time in 15 months. Even so, the expected tightening in monetary conditions had apparently been priced into most stocks in the Dow Jones industrial average which, after fairly strong early gains, was hovering around the unchanged mark.

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## COMMENT

Ken Clarke insists this is a wonder-boom that will not be followed by bust later – he has found a miracle cure for the ups and downs of the economic cycle that has somehow escaped the notice of Mr Greenspan'

## Booming Britain could do with a stitch in time

Economy A is growing faster than its sustainable trend, unemployment is at its lowest for years and pay inflation is creeping up. The financial markets have been prepared to expect a small increase in interest rates that will allow the recovery to continue without being blown off course by rising inflation. The authorities are steering a delicate course between boom and bust, so far very successfully.

Economy B is also growing at a pace above trend, but rapidly falling unemployment and rising wage inflation. However, a rise in interest rates would be greeted with utter astonishment. For economy A is, of course, the US, nicely the right side of the presidential elections, and economy B is the UK in the heat of the longest election campaign this century. In the US the Fed Chairman Alan Greenspan has signalled the likelihood of a rise in Federal Funds rates after today's Open Market Committee meeting.

On this side of the Atlantic, the Government has given up all pretence of modest economic recovery. "Britain is Booming," announces the latest mailshot from Conservative Central Office. Ken Clarke insists that this is a wonder-boom that will not be followed by bust later – he has found a miracle cure for the ups and downs of the economic cycle that has somehow escaped the notice of Mr Greenspan.

The British economy almost certainly is in better shape than for a long time. Yesterday's balance of payments figures were

much improved compared with the same stage of the last economic cycle, in the late 1980s. The pay-off for these genuine improvements is that interest rates should not need to rise as much as they would have in the past. But the fact that it ought to be easier to keep the economy on a steady course does not mean the Chancellor can get away without touching the brakes at all. Today's expected interest rate move by the Fed, a classic "stitch-in-time" policy of the sort the Bank of England would love to follow, will highlight the risks the Government is taking with the British economy.

### Wallace digs in for long haul at CWC

In his former life Graham Wallace, the new chief exec at Cable & Wireless Communications, used to run Granada's motorway service stations. He therefore knows a thing or two about squeezing the last drop out of a captive market. Now that Granada is facing competition again, having been forced to sell off Wellcome Break, it is giving away Burger King Whopper Meals for 1p but that's life in the fast-food lane.

The challenge facing Mr Wallace at CWC, the great white hope of the cable telephony industry, is altogether different. It does not possess a monopoly or anything like it. When its cable network is built out it will still only pass a quarter of the homes

in the country having spent a cool £6.3bn. Even when it corners a market the cable industry does not have much idea of how to exploit it. The cable companies that have joined forces with Mercury in CWC have spent billions digging up the streets and yet have only 580,000 customers out of the 3 million passed to show for it.

So for the rationale for the merger looks to lie largely in the financial engineering. The accumulated losses of the cable firms will knock about £100m off the parent company's tax bill. CWC gets much better borrowing rates on the £3.3bn it still needs to build out the network and condensing four head offices and workforces into one should save another £100m or so off its cost base.

But to justify the £4bn-27bn price tag being put on the business by analysts will require something far more. On its own Mercury was too big to be nimble but too small to compete on an equal footing with BT. The cable companies were good at digging holes but ran out of ideas when it came to signing up customers. If Mr Wallace can engineer even a tenth of the cultural change needed at CWC he will be worth every penny of his £100,000 signing-on fee.

He has made a start by linking remuneration to levels of customer service and bringing on board a marketing director who learnt her craft at Richard Branson's elbow. But the so-called synergies to be had from meshing the cable companies' customer base together with Mercury's technological

wizardry are almost certainly overblown while rebranding the business under the Cable & Wireless logo is a step in the dark. It may have more consumer appeal than Nynex CableComms but it is a brand which remains largely unknown at home. On their own the constituent parts of CWC may have been facing a losing battle against BT but Mr Wallace has his work cut out to make the whole demonstrably bigger.

### Krupp comes a spectacular cropper

Having parked its tanks on Thyssen's lawn with the engines running, Krupp last night embarked on the corporate equivalent of the retreat from Moscow. The withdrawal of Krupp's hostile bid for its fellow steelmaker has gone down as one of the shortest and most disastrous campaigns in annals of Germany's corporate history.

If the intention of the Krupp chairman Gerhard Cromme was to bomb Thyssen to the negotiating table, then the tactics have misfired spectacularly. The outcome of the continuing talks between the two sides could well be Thyssen's takeover of Krupp.

Apart from the injury to Mr Cromme's reputation as Germany's takeover king (largely built on the fact that he is only exponent), the collateral damage will be unpleasant. First, there is the standing of Krupp. By tabling the bid it exposed the

weakness of its own financial position. It quickly became apparent that the mountain of debt necessary to fund the deal would have stretched Krupp's balance sheet to breaking point without a large share issue which would in turn have diluted the family trusts that control 80 per cent of the company.

Second, the position of Krupp's advisers, Deutsche Bank, Dresdner Bank and Goldman Sachs looks tricky. By backing the bid in the first place they took a huge amount of flak, not just from protesting steelworkers but from the German body corporate to whom such tactics are anathema. By dropping the bid so quickly, they have been made to look inept and they will probably be made to pay for that ineptness through the loss of future mandates.

The third loser is the German steel industry. Whatever consensus deal Krupp and Thyssen now come up with to rationalise their respective steel interests it will almost certainly not be enough to put the industry on an equal footing with its competitors elsewhere in Europe. With production costs a third higher than those of British Steel, Krupp and Thyssen have a long way to go to catch up.

The final casualty is the German economy itself. The consensual approach to industrial restructuring has been tried and found wanting. But who else will want to give the Anglo-Saxon approach a spin now that Krupp has come such a cropper?

## £270,000 in perks for chief of new C&W group

Chris Godsmark  
Business Correspondent

Graham Wallace, chief executive of Cable & Wireless's proposed new £5bn cable group, was given a £100,000 "golden hello" on joining the company and will receive a £170,000 bonus this year in addition to his basic salary, documents issued to shareholders disclosed yesterday.

The offer documents for Cable & Wireless Communications (CWC) also reveal that the complex process of

### How the fees add up

SEC filing	£50,000
NYSE	£36,800
London Stock Exchange	£82,000
Panel	£50,000
Dealer manager	£1,923,000
Financial adviser	£1,923,000
Information agent/US	£1,923,000
Accountants/UK	£26,000
Legal	£10,463,000
Accounting	£3,433,000
Printing & Stationery	£1,100,000
Marketing	£84,000
Total	£6,673,800



All smiles: Graham Wallace, chief executive (right), yesterday with Nicholas Mearing Smith, finance director



Photograph: Kalpesh Lathige

## BT moves to tighten grip on Cellnet

British Telecom moved swiftly yesterday to strengthen its grip over Cellnet, the UK's second largest mobile phone operator in which it has a 60 per cent stake, writes Chris Godsmark.

BT has appointed Ray Smith, 42, responsible for its consumer products business and retail chain as Cellnet managing director. It follows the abrupt resignation of Howard Ford as Cellnet MD three weeks ago. No reason has been given for Mr Ford's departure, although it has been linked with City concerns at the network's subscriber numbers in recent months.

Stafford Taylor, MD of BT's personal communications division, said after Mr Ford's departure that he would be taking a closer interest in Cellnet. BT has made clear it would like to buy out its 40 per cent partner, Securicor, but has so far been blocked from doing so on monopoly grounds.

Cellnet has not released customer numbers for this year, but analysts have estimated more subscribers are leaving the network than are joining. The performance puts Cellnet at the bottom of the league table of four networks.

Mr Taylor said: "Ray joins Cellnet at a time of great challenge in the cellular business and in the mobile market. I know he will bring to Cellnet the talents which he has shown in the retail and consumer products division." Mr Smith joined BT in 1987, becoming head of residential calls.

## Reed's science division boosted by \$320m deal

Tom Stevenson  
City Editor

Reed accelerated its move into electronic publishing yesterday with a \$320m public offer for MDL Information Systems, a California-based supplier of scientific information management systems.

The recommended deal, which will boost Reed's most profitable division, scientific journals, and goes some way to using up the company's estimated £1bn cash pile, is expected to defuse speculation that Reed might be the object of a hostile bid from Reuters.

MDL's software systems, databases and services help customers in the chemical, pharmaceutical and biotechnology industries to manage, analyse and communicate high volumes of research and development material. The company made a pre-tax profit of \$11m in the year to March 1996 on revenues of \$62m.

Science publishing is



Nigel Stapleton: Warned of £1bn acquisition plans

also a scientific titles has helped profits move steadily ahead. Earlier this month, Reed announced a 10 per cent improvement in profits to £500m.

At the time of the results announcement, co-chairman Nigel Stapleton said Reed could swallow an acquisition of more than £1bn. Last year he warned that Reed was prepared to sacrifice strong earnings and margin growth to aggressively pursue acquisitions in electronic publishing.

Analysis welcomed the purchase, saying MDL would mesh well with Elsevier's science publishing business and give an extra push to its plans for electronic distribution.

"In terms of multiples of sales and profits the price is pretty substantial but I think the synergy advantages will justify that," one said.

The exit price/earnings multiple of 32 is considered high for a publishing company but a reasonable rating for a takeover in the information technology sector.

It is thought the continuing outflow of cash on acquisitions might act as a catalyst for Reed to put what remains of its consumer book publishing operations on sale.

The division was withdrawn from sale two years ago after it failed to attract high enough bids but Mr Stapleton said earlier this month that it was confident the operation would soon be attractive enough to sell again.

## ScotAm ready to name its preferred bidder

Clifford German

Scottish Amicable is poised to announce the preferred bidder it will recommend to the society's 1.1 million members, with the Prudential yesterday emerging as the City's favourite candidate. A decision could come as early as today.

The ScotAm board has to choose between the Prudential and the Australian-based AMP by the end of the month. Analysis said a decision is unlikely to be announced on Good Friday, the Easter weekend or Easter Monday.

It is now clear that the initial decision will only name the preferred bidder. Unless the other bidders give permission details of the rival offers will not be published until the ScotAm board's formal circular is sent to members for approval, and that could be up to two weeks after the initial announcement.

That opens up the possibility of an argument over whether the best bid has been chosen. ScotAm's advisers, SBC Warburg, have continued to insist that the winning bidder may not necessarily be the one with the highest headline figure, because of difficulties in comparing like with like.

The Prudential's initial offer was valued at £2.2bn but this included a £1.5bn loan to the ScotAm life fund. That would help

it invest more profitably in the long run but would not have the same appeal to policyholders as a large cash bonus or allocation of shares.

Mr Brown promised that CWC would overcome the marketing weaknesses that have dogged many cable operators.

"Cable & Wireless Communications is a powerful new force. We will be customer-led; we will be marketing-driven."

So far only 9 per cent of potential customers have signed up for the television service, and 22 per cent for the telephone offering. The biggest change will come this autumn, when the four brands, Mercury, Bell Cablemedia, Nynex CableComms and Videotron, are replaced by the Cable & Wireless name.

There was no further news on job cuts, though Mr Brown made clear that merging four companies meant substantial and "aggressive" cost savings.

The seven customer service centres are likely to drop to between two and four, while some of the four network operations centres will also close.

It is thought this will mean at least 1,000 job cuts out of the combined workforce of 12,500.

CWC will also save £100m over two years by offsetting Mercury's tax bill with the accumulated losses of the cable companies.

CWC revealed pro forma pre-tax profits of £93m in the 9 months to the end of December, up from £46m in the year to the end of March.

Analysts have valued the business at £4bn-£5.5bn.

## Bass merger decision is delayed until after election

Chris Godsmark  
Business Correspondent

The Government yesterday dismissed competition lawyers by confirming that decisions on three reports by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission, including the £300m deal by Bass to buy Allied Domecq's stake in Carlsberg-Tetley, will be delayed until after the election.

It means a Labour secretary of state for trade and industry could be faced with a series of high-profile merger decisions straight after the election, giving a first test of the party's consumer-led competition policy.

Labour could also decide the outcome of the controversial tie-up between British Airways and American Airlines. The Office of Fair Trading has suggested pro-

visional conditions under which the deal can avoid an MMC investigation, but rival carriers including Virgin have criticised these as being far too lenient.

One competition lawyer, Fiona Schaeffer from solicitors SJ Berwin, said: "The main issue here is one of delay, with the uncertainty of what a new Labour government will do. It may be those decisions will be quite different under Labour from the Conservatives. The BA-American decision is now clearly taking place in an overtly political context."

The MMC report on the Bass/Carlsberg-Tetley deal yesterday arrived on the desk of Ian Lang, President of the Board of Trade. There has been intense speculation that Bass may walk away from the agreement to buy

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## business

# Burford in £100m hotels venture

**Tom Stevenson**  
City Editor

Burford confirmed itself as one of the property sector's most innovative and entrepreneurial businesses yesterday, forging a £100m link with one of America's most successful hoteliers to recreate New York's Royalton and Paramount hotels in London and around Europe.

The deal looks certain to be the prelude to another Burford demerger to follow the recent spin-offs of three businesses including the Trocadero leisure complex in London's Piccadilly Circus.

Burford has been in negotiations since before Christmas with Ian Schrager about recreating his successful "lifestyle" hotels for wealthy baby-boomers in Europe. He made his name in the 1970s with Studio 54, the New York nightspot whose regulars included Bianca Jagger and Andy Warhol before opening a string of chic

hotels across America. Mr Schrager continues to rub shoulders with the rich and fashionable and boasts Madonna as a partner in his Miami hotel, the Delano. He will be managing director of the joint venture and will be responsible for the development and operation of the hotels.

Nick Leslau, Burford's chief executive, said yesterday: "There is little doubt that Ian has created a business which is the envy of the hotel world. We are extremely excited about the prospect of working with him to create an exciting range of highly individual hotels in London and Europe."

Burford, the UK's ninth-largest property company, has bought three office buildings in London with a view to getting permission to change their use to hotels and acquired an option on a fourth near London's Covent Garden last year.

The move into hotels is the latest diversification for Bur-

ford, which has used a blue-chip property portfolio bought from the wreckage of the early 1990s recession as a springboard for a raft of related leisure businesses.

It has teamed up with Sega of Japan to exploit the heavy flow of tourist traffic through its Trocadero centre and even acquired the rights to favourite children's character Noddy.

Hotels are enjoying a prolonged boom, especially in the capital, where rising demand has combined with an almost total absence of new hotel building since the recession to provide the perfect conditions for the industry.

The proposed deal also highlights Burford's technique of spinning off its leisure businesses to benefit from the higher ratings attached to these operations than its core property activities while retaining a stake in the companies' fortunes.

Burford also demerged Granchester, its retail ware-



Exciting prospect: Nick Leslau said Burford would create a range of highly individual hotels in London and Europe

house operation, and Columbus, a publishing business. There are plans afoot to subdivide the Trocadero even further by divesting off the licensing business surrounding the Enid Blyton portfolio.

It has been a successful formula, with Mr Leslau and his partner, Nigel Wray, emerging as the property sector's favourite entrepreneurs. Burford's shares have risen almost 10-fold in the past four years.

## IN BRIEF

### China gives Boeing \$700m order

Boeing is to announce a \$700m aircraft sale to China, its biggest since 1995, ending two years of talks that stalled with trade friction between Peking and Washington, industry and government officials said. The order is believed to be for five 777s. The plane manufacturer is likely to disclose the sale at a press conference in Peking today coinciding with a four-day visit by vice-president Al Gore, the highest-ranking US official to visit China since 1989.

### BAT denies fighting fund rumour

BAT Industries denied weekend reports that the company had approached other cigarette makers to set up an industry-wide fighting fund. "There is no basis for this story," said Ralph Edmondson, BAT's investment relations manager. Newspaper reports said BAT had contacted rival cigarette makers Philip Morris, RJ Reynolds and Lorillard to form a \$3bn fighting fund and insurance pool to cope with tobacco-related litigation.

### Drug sales push up Roche figures

Roche, the Swiss pharmaceuticals group, said 1996 net profit rose 16 per cent as drug sales and financial income surged, and it announced its tenth dividend increase in a row. Net profit rose to a record SFr3.90bn (\$2.7bn) from SFr3.37bn.

### Net profits double at Gehe

Net profits at Gehe, the German pharmaceuticals distributor, more than doubled last year to DM400m as a result of extraordinary gains from the sale of its five drug manufacturing units. Before extraordinary items, pre-tax profit climbed 15.6 per cent to DM407m on sales 12 per cent higher at DM21.4bn.

### Software delay hits Microsoft

Shares in Microsoft fell as much as 7.5 per cent in early trading yesterday amid concern the next version of the company's Windows software will be delayed. Microsoft has delayed the shipment of next revision of its operating system until 1998.

### New house sales increase

Tony Travis, chairman of Travis Perkins, the building materials group, said the level of new house sales and total housing transactions had increased progressively since the second half of last year. Pre-tax profits in 1996 rose by 9 per cent to £39.8m.

### Migraine treatment approved

Zeneca said it had received approval from the Swedish regulatory authority to market Zomig, a new oral migraine treatment. Sweden is the second country after the UK to approve the drug.

### Brammer warns of slowdown

Robert Foulkes-Jones, chief executive of Brammer, the electronics distribution group, warned of a slowdown in growth this year. He was speaking after the group reported an increase in pre-tax profits from £21.6m to £28.2m.

### Net income boosted at Lehman

Lehman Brothers' pre-tax profit margin widened to 23.7 per cent from 19.2 per cent in the fiscal first quarter ended in February, boosting net income to \$14m, or \$1.16 per share. Lehman said the first quarter was boosted by gains in strategically important high-margin businesses.

### Profits up at Waterford Wedgwood

Waterford Wedgwood reported a 24 per cent jump in pre-tax profits to IR£34.9m, higher than expected, after record sales. "We have set ourselves ambitious goals for the turn of the century," said the chairman, Tony O'Reilly, referring to his pledge to double sales by 2001.

## Motor dealer warns of profit fall

Shares in Appleyard fell 5p to 60p yesterday after the motor dealer warned 1996 profits would be sharply down on the previous year and said the dividend would be cut.

Appleyard expects to announce pre-exceptional, pre-tax profits of £3.2m for the calendar year, compared to £7.8m a year ago.

The company said in light of this "extremely poor result" it intended to recommend a reduced final dividend of 1.6p, making a total dividend for the year of 4.7p (6.3p).

Appleyard said the fall in pre-tax profits and dividends was a result of an "extremely disappointing" final quarter in its passenger car division, especially in relation to used car volumes and margins.

Appleyard expects to sell further dealerships as going concerns during 1997, with four in advanced stages of negotiation. The company also decided not to invest additional capital at eight locations owing to the absence of acceptable returns, it said.

Appleyard estimates these actions will result in an exceptional reorganisation charge of around £8.6m in 1996, while actual and planned disposals are expected to generate approximately £8m during 1997.

It said the commercial vehicle division and the contract hire and leasing business, jointly owned with Barclays Bank, were unaffected by this review and continued to operate profitably.

The company said the start to the year had "on the whole, been encouraging", with order intake in the contract hire and leasing business being ahead of budget.

Appleyard will split the roles of chairman and chief executive from the end of 1997. Mike Williamson, group chairman and chief executive, will relinquish all executive duties on 31 December and become non-executive chairman. Negotiations to appoint a new chief executive are said to be at an advanced stage.

Appleyard's full-year results are due on 14 April.

## Results revive wilting shares in biotechs

### Magnus Grimond

Shares in Shield Diagnostics and PPL Therapeutics, two biotechnology-related companies, recovered some recent heavy losses yesterday after announced encouraging results from trials of new products.

Shield soared 40p to 690p after it said British tests on its activated factor twelve (AFT) "point towards" it becoming a significant tool for the prediction of heart disease in the general population.

Separately, PPL saw its shares rise 20p to 447.5p on news that it had extended its transgenic drug creation technology to rabbits. The gain makes up some of the ground lost since the price jumped and then collapsed a month ago after the announcement that it held an exclusive licence to Dolly the sheep, the world's first cloned animal.

Dundee-based Shield yesterday played down the importance of the collapse of US trials on AFT, the announcement of which late on Friday prompted a collapse in the share price to 667.5p after having rocketed to a peak of 919p. A spokeswoman for the company described the study of 700 patients in a 10-year old US government-sponsored programme as "in a sense a bust study, because the main ones are in the UK".

Yesterday the company was concentrating on the UK tests. Shield said they showed that increased AFT levels in the blood correlated with an increased risk of disease. At the same time, there were over 30 per cent higher levels of AFT in patients with coronary heart disease than healthy people, compared with 7 per cent more cholesterol, an existing test marker.

Separately, PPL announced it had successfully produced a so-called amidated peptide in the milk of genetically modified rabbits. The production of calcitonin, the first time a peptide of this class has been produced, was being claimed as offering the potential for a greater number of pharmaceutical products from transgenic technology. Calcitonin is used in the treatment of ailments such as brittle bone disease.

The benefit of a wide geographic spread in the core cement business was evident in a mixed bag of profits from around the world. The US continues to boom with volume and price rises leading to a 19 per cent profit jump and Malaysia remains strong. That made up for a 9 per cent slowdown at home, where a 3 per cent volume decline more than outweighed sub-inflationary price rises and Chile, the former powerhouse, where domestic competition started to eat into returns.

But the real excitement came in heating, where cost-cutting led to doubled profits despite sluggish continental markets, keeping the lid on turnover, down 2 per cent on the year. Again that made up for disappointing profits in bathrooms.

Blue Circle's shares have outperformed the market handsomely for four years now, which is no surprise, the stock's fans say, when you

Company Results					
	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend	
Amey (F)	235.4m (244m)	11m (5.32m)	22.4p (12.7p)	9.0p (7.1p)	
Autoglass Holdings (F)	180.4m (178.3m)	44.6m (78.2m)	13.3p (36.3p)	6.5p (6.5p)	
Bearnes (F)	180.5m (178.8m)	23.04m (16.78m)	5.1p (33.01p)	15.1p (13.5p)	
BGI (F)	1.82m (1.78m)	297.6m (265.8m)	2.56p (18.4p)	13.25p (12.5p)	
Brammer (F)	205m (193m)	28.1m (21.59m)	40.7p (31.5p)	16.0p (14.25p)	
Cap & Regional Props (F)	(-)	6.1m (4.7m)	12.21p (8.85p)	3.0p	
Farth Ports (F)	84.7m (47.3m)	22.2m (15.3m)	38.8p (29.4p)	13.0p	
Global Group (F)	148.1m (119.4m)	4.16m (2.91m)	1.07p (1.51p)	0.65p (0.61p)	
Hare Group (F)	137.1m (125.1m)	2.72m (1.2m)	4.88p (2.7p)	1.9p (1.25p)	
Hexapac (F)	6.3m (6.3m)	10.7m (17.4m)	4.3p (3.3p)	10.5p (10.0p)	
Kingspan Group (F)	101.25m (108.3m)	101.3m (96m)	32.77p (31.8p)	14.5p (14.5p)	
Morgan Crucible (F)	881.1m (859.2m)	100.2m (85.9m)	25.1p (25.5p)	14.5p (13.8p)	
Nestor-BMA (F)	137.2m (141.7m)	-2.02m (5.31m)	-5.42p (5.78p)	3.47p (3.15p)	
Nottingham Group (F)	55.3m (49.5m)	4.25m (3.88m)	5.2p (5.82p)	3.75p (3.75p)	
PPL (F)	2.5m (4.4m)	-8.2m (-1.44m)	-4.1p (-3.2p)	0p	
Scansors (F)	42.1m (41.1m)	16.42m (16.42p)	16.4p (18.4p)	13p (13p)	
Severnfield-Harrow (F)	66.12m (58.21m)	3.05m (1.87m)	1.1p (0.8p)	0p	
Shoreline Group (F)	166.1m (179.6m)	5.02m (7.22m)	1.7p (8.8p)	3.8p (3.6p)	
Taylor Nelson (F)	84.2m (75.4m)	5.03m (5.03m)	1.18p (2.02p)	0.8p (1.7p)	
Travis Perkins (F)	518.6m (491.6m)	39.8m (36.5m)	25.3p (23.7p)	10.0p (9.3p)	
Translife (F)	259.8m (211m)	14.6m (6.72m)	7.1p (4.6p)	2.34p (2.03p)	
T&S Stores (F)	500.1m (445.2m)	17.72m (15.46m)	16.75p (16.75p)	7.75p (7.75p)	
Usher TV (F)	(-)	9.02m (8.2m)	11.46p (10.35p)	5.1p (4.5p)	
Waterford Wedgwood (F)	375.3m (344.5m)	1834.8m (1828m)	18.4p (18.38p)	11.1p (10.4p)	
WCI (F)	93m (75.8m)	9.05m (8.03m)	15.1p (13.3p)	7.8p (7.1p)	

(F) - Final (F) - Interim (H) - Nine months

## THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY TOM STEVENSON

# Blue Circle turns up heat with good buy at right price

**B**lue Circle and acquisitions have not always mixed, as the overpriced purchase of its heating and bathrooms businesses at the wrong end of the last boom showed too clearly. Yesterday's purchase of St Mary's Cement in Canada, however, compares with a sector average of 12 times but represents a large discount to the rest of the market, which seems harsh given growth prospects and the probability that an eventual sale of the heating and bathrooms side could lead to a substantial return of value to shareholders. Good value.

The deal brings in 40 ready-mixed concrete plants, 6 million tonnes of aggregates and a handful of other block and brick operations at what industry watchers believe is the bottom of the cycle in North America. Anti-trust considerations meant the family seller had only one serious buyer to deal with and Blue Circle has done a fine deal, offering pre-interest and tax profits of £29m for an annual interest cost on the £200m consideration of about £15m.

The shares closed 13p lower at 403.5p, a reflection of disappointment with full-year figures for 1996, but with all the shortfall in expectations occurring in the difficult Nigerian market, analysts remained unfazed. Pre-tax profits of £29.6m were 9 per cent better than 1995's £27.8m before last year's restructuring charge, and a 6 per cent dividend rise keeps the momentum going since 1993's held payout.

The benefit of a wide geographic spread in the core cement business was evident in a mixed bag of profits from around the world. The US continues to boom with volume and price rises leading to a 19 per cent profit jump and Malaysia remains strong. That made up for a 9 per cent slowdown at home, where a 3 per cent volume decline more than outweighed sub-inflationary price rises and Chile, the former powerhouse, where domestic competition started to eat into returns.

But the real excitement came in heating, where cost-cutting led to doubled profits despite sluggish continental markets, keeping the lid on turnover, down 2 per cent on the year. Again that made up for disappointing profits in bathrooms.

Blue

## market report / shares

## Data Bank

## BAT puffs ahead as insurers sink on litigation fears

## Taking Stock

The smoking and health litigation took sudden toll of insurance shares. Worries that some of the leading insurers could be liable if awards are made against the tobacco giants seemed to be prompted by a leading securities house.

Schroders is believed to have told clients that many of the older policies, those taken out in the 1950s and 1960s, could leave insurers exposed to successful claims. More recent policies excluded liability.

BAT Industries was thrown by the Schroders claim: "It could be right; we just don't know," a spokesman said. Schroders refused to comment. It was unclear just how much of any BAT settlement would be covered by the older insurance policies.

The investment house has apparently produced a new BAT break-up valuation of between 670p to 830p.

The possibility some claims

could be ring-fenced helped lower Royal Sun Alliance 16p to 43p, GRE 9p to 27.5p and Commercial Union, which feels there could be some modest liability, 20p to 64p. Prudential Corporation, said to be the likely winner of the Scottish Amicable auction, lost 18p to 540p.

BAT, for so long in the doldrums as the health lobby has taken the initiative, was the day's best-performing blue chip, puffing ahead 15p to 505p. Imperial shaved 2.5p to 417p.

The rest of the market had another bad session, weighed down by election and interest rate considerations. Footsie tumbled 40 points to 4,214.8, lowest for eight weeks. The supporting FISE 250 index was cut by 28.1 to 4,536.3.

There is a widespread conviction that US interest rates will be forced higher this week and the next domestic move will be a

sharp uplift, soon after the election. Interest-sensitive shares, such as builders and retailers, took the brunt of the selling pressure.

Bass fell 8.5p to 800.5p as it became apparent its controversial takeover bid for Carlsberg Tetley, the nation's third-largest brewer, was likely to be stuck in the Whitehall system until after the election.

There is also the suspicion Bass is, anyway, preparing to walk away. To allow the deal to be made, the Monopolies & Mergers Commission was said to be demanding such draconian demands the brewer had decided it was unrealistic to go ahead.

Bass, it was said, was being

## MARKET REPORT

## DEREK PAIN

stock market reporter of the year

told to sacrifice more than 1,000 pubs and some leading brands if it wanted to leapfrog Scottish & Newcastle and again become the nation's biggest brewer.

Scottish and Whitbread, which could suffer if a stand-alone Carlsberg Tetley is forced into a desperate cut-prices campaign to boost sales, weakened with Scottish off 11p at 664.5p and Whitbread 11.5p to 785.5p.

Shell was another under the weather. The oil giant, caught up in a local Nigerian dispute, fell 24.5p to 1,056.5p after closing six production stations, cutting 100,000 barrels a day.

Stagecoach had another

wayward day as the market continued to fret about its South West Trains fiasco, falling 29.5p to 649.5p.

Imperial Chemical Industries was hit by another round of profit downgradings. SBC Warburg cut its estimates from £635m to £565m and from £750m to £730m. But it believes the worst is over and the shares could be worth buying; they fell 12.5p to 690p.

Reed International, linked with Reuters in recent speculation, fell 19.5p to 1,084p; it is splashing out \$320m for MDL Information Systems, a US group.

An array of newcomers did well. Diagonal, an IT consultancy, reached 310p from a 275p placing; Heals, the home furnishings retailer issued at 175p closed at 205.5p; Heliophare providing motororing services, rose from 100p to 126.5p and Presbury Leisure traded at 2.75p from a 2p placing.

Shield Diagnostic's eagerly awaited presentation was well received with the shares rallying 40p to 690p.

Chemical Design, a software group supplying the pharmaceutical industry, rose 25p to 245p. The company, floated at 110p in August, has won an EU contract to supply a computerised chemical information system.

Charlton Athletic, which made a relegation-style debut on Friday, edged 1.5p ahead to 64.5p. The shares were placed at 80p. Stockbroker Feather & Greenwood is a "man-

agement with extensive plc and financial experience is taking executive control and intend to operate at a profit", it says. Profits this year, boosted by transfer fees, should be around £1.55m.

Netcall, a computer telephone group, firms 1p to 75.1p. Herald Investment piled in at 60p.

## Share Price Data

Prices are in sterling except where stated. The yield is last year's dividend, grossed up by 20 per cent, divided by the share price. The price earnings (PE) ratio is the share price divided by last year's earnings per share, including exceptional items.

Other details: Ex rights & ex-dividend; Earnings per share; All or a United Securities Market; Suspended; Partly Paid; Nil Paid Shares; + A Stock.

Source: FT Information

## The Independent Index

The index allows you to access real-time share prices by phone from London Stock Exchange. Simply dial 0891 123 333, and when prompted to do, enter the 4-digit code for the share you want to track. To access the latest financial reports dial 0891 123 333 followed by the two-digit codes below.

FTSE 100 - Real-time 00 Sterling Rates 04 Privatisation Issues 36  
UK Stock Market Report 01 Bullion Report 05 Water Shares 39  
UK Company News 02 Wall St Report 20 Electricity Shares 40  
Foreign Exchange 03 Tokyo Market 21 High Street Banks 41

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For assistance, call our helpline 071 873 4378 (900am - 500pm).

## Market leaders: Top 20 volumes

Stock	Vol 100	Stock	Vol 100	Stock	Vol 100
British Steel	500,000	BT	100,000	British Telecom	700,000
Citicorp	50,000	BG	50,000	Salvation Army	500,000
BAA Inds	150,000	ASA Group	940,000	Vodafone	650,000
Lloyds TSB	150,000	Poyal & Sun Abo	80,000	National Grid	540,000
BTG	140,000	Baader	70,000	Guinness	50,000
				GTE	40,000

## FTSE 100 Index hour by hour

Open 4,220 up 58 11.00 4,224 down 26 22 14.00 4,221 down 333  
10.00 4,221 down 22 15.00 4,221 down 337  
10.00 4,221 down 22 16.00 4,223 down 253  
10.00 4,223 down 251 17.00 4,224 down 254  
Close 4,218 down 403

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BTG	140,000	Baader	70,000	GTE	40,000

## FTSE 100 Index hour by hour



# Avro Anson an Aintree high flier

Being sane and sober might seem unlikely credentials to carry into the Grand National – particularly for punters – but Avro Anson will at Aintree next week because his trainer planned it that way even before the horse's birth.

Maurice Camacho has not only trained Avro Anson throughout his seven-year racing career, he bred him too. And when picking a partner for the gelding's dam, the hot-headed springing mare Tremellick, it was a calming influence that was deemed to be crucial.

"My stepfather [the trainer Charlie Hall] told me when I started as his assistant that if I couldn't face adversity then I was to get out. Well, I've been in this game for a long time now, but I was damned disappointed all the same."

Camacho, 52, has indeed been in the business for some time, having taken out a training licence at his stables at Malton, North Yorkshire, 22 years ago. First, though, his stepfather "sent me to *Timeform*," where he did four years as a comment writer for that respected firm's publications, wit-

**John Cobb** talks to a trainer with a calm approach to the Grand National

nessing the exploits of such great chasers as Arkle, Flying Bolt and Mill House.

A colleague at the Halifax-based firm, Brian Skirton, defected to the other side, setting

**'He's taken until the age of nine to mature, but this is his time. Now he really fills your eye'**

up a small chain of bookmakers in Cornwall, but pledging also to have a horse in training with Camacho.

"He's been a big, bawling horse with a large frame and he's only just started to fit it. But he's a hell of a lot stronger than last year. Now he really fills your eye. He's a very handsome horse."

Despite only now reaching maturity, Avro Anson, who has been in training with Camacho since his two-year-old days, has won on the Flat, over hurdles and now over fences – picking up over £100,000 over obstacles.

"He lacks experience – not racing, but chasing," Camacho said. "He's had just six races

over fences, but the only time he's been out of the first two was when he partied company with Peter Niven last time. But he's been over the big fences at Haydock and round the Mildmay course at Aintree, which is a very quick track, and his jumping is not a problem.

"I had his brothers and sisters and none of them needed much work so I'm not worried that he's had just the two outings this year. I've trained him for this time of the year and I don't think I've ever had him in better form."

The rain which fell at Aintree yesterday has still left the ground no softer than good, which suits Camacho and Avro Anson. "I'll be a happy man if it stays dry between now and Saturday week," Camacho said. "But it's old turf, it never gets very wet, very poached."

"I'll be even happier if Mr [Kim] Bailey leaves in the top weight, Master Oats, to keep the weights down. Then we'll be meeting some of these good horses at just about level



Camacho: High hopes

weights instead of having to give them a few pounds."

Skirton, now semi-retired as a bookmaker, has a passion for old aeroplanes, hence the name Avro Anson. Grand National day is usually one when the bookies can cheer on masses, whatever the result, but this year there will be one set apart from his colleagues. His hopes are more than just a flight of fancy.

## McCoy uncertain for Aintree

Tony McCoy was still unsure yesterday whether he will be allowed to ride in the Grand National. The Jockey Club is still trying to discover if the champion jockey was unconscious for longer than a minute after a fall last week, which would rule him out of Aintree.

"Investigations are still going on and it all depends on talks with the doctors and the ambulance staff on the day," the Jockey Club director of public affairs, David Pipe, said.

### SANDOWN

**HYPERION**  
3.55 Denver Bay  
4.40 Norse Raider  
5.00 The Mill Height

**GONG:** Good to Firm.  
Eight-hand course, seven testing fences along back straight; run-in of 300yd.  
Course is on A307, 4m S of Kingston. Easter station (service from London, Waterloo) approx 10min. ADMIRAL: Crabb (17 – 21yo), Junior Club (17 – 21yo) 8.13; Grandeur & Poldark (10); St. Peter's: CAA Park 22 to members (More Lane), remainder free.

### SIS

**LEADING TRAINERS WITH WINNERS:** 7 Grand – 23 winners from 147 runners and a success rate of 4.8% and a 5.1 level stakes of £29.11; 7.5% to 10.7%.  
64 runners, 17.7%, – 52.7%; 9.8 – 7 winners, 65 runners, 12.7%, – 6.7%; 6 Balding – 7 winners, 68 runners, 10.3%, – 4.7%.

**LEADING JOCKEYS:** R. Dwyane – 32 winners, 110 rides, 29.1%, +53.0%; A. Marzocchi – 21 winners, 92 rides, 22.5%, 45.20; 3.00 – 30 winners, 114 rides, 17.7%, – 52.7%; 9.8 – 7 winners, 65 runners, 12.7%, – 6.7%.

**BALANCED FIRST-TIME WINNERS:** New Chaser (racing) (3.00).

**WINNERS IN LAST SEVEN DAYS:** Harrington Lady (1.05) won at Doncaster on Tuesday. LONG-DISTANCE WINNERS: Stately Home (2.80) has been sent 337 miles by P. Bowes from Haworthians; Dyfed.

**2.15 GUNNER HERITAGE CAMPAGNA NOVICE CHASE (CLASS D)**  
£5,500 added 2m 4f 11yds Penalty Value £4,030

1. 1A/234 FLYING INSTRUCTOR (14) (7) (Lay) P. Hester 7/12 10... R Bellamy  
2. 1A/235 MISTER DRUM (10) (8) (M) Hester 8/11 11... D Colchester  
3. 12/261 MISTER DRUM (10) (8) (M) Hester 8/11 11... W Muster  
– 3 dead...

**BETTING:** 4-6 Flying Instructor, 5-6 Muster, 7-8 Bellamy

**FORM GUIDE**

**FLYING INSTRUCTOR:** has had two weeks to recover from his Cheltenham exertions and, considering that was only his fourth run of the season, he should be plenty fresh enough. He has won his last two starts and is in great form. He went to the meet with a 100% record and went to best beaten four lengths and has only to the point with the pound that cost him in the Arkle. Finishing a length and three-quarters behind him on 70 wins terms Flying Instructor was beaten just over eight lengths in fourth to Royal at the Festival and is going to be difficult to beat on ground that will suit him nicely. Not that there will be an easy task for the leading trainer, as he has a 100% record in the last seven days. He has beaten the two best in the race, namely by a comfortable six lengths from Gallois at Tewkesbury. These two are rated much the same over hurdles, but Mister Dunn's Kempton defeat at the hands of Greenbook and Landi Afar had something to do with over fences. Just Bruce has been beaten three times, landing a Leicester maiden chase and faces a very stiff task against the others. Selection: BRACHFIELD

**3.20 ROYAL ARTILLERY GOLD CUP CHASE (CLASS E)** £25,000 added 3m 11yds Penalty Value £3,469

1. 1A/231 BRACHFIELD (18) (7) (R) H. Muller 8/11 10... Mr D. Muller-Hedges (7) B  
2. 1A/232 LUCKY DOLLAR (14) (7) (R) H. Muller 8/11 10... Mr D. Muller-Hedges (7) B  
3. 6/2653 MACCOLIN EXPRESS (18) (7) (R) H. Muller 8/11 10... Mr J. Weather (7) B  
4. 6/2654 SONOFAPUFF (22) (7) (R) W. Wood (7) D  
5. 6/2655 TARDIEN TICOD (17) (7) (R) D. Williams 10/11 10... Mr D. Williams (7) V  
6. 6/2656 TARDIEN TICOD (17) (7) (R) D. Williams 10/11 10... Mr D. Williams (7) V  
7. 6/2657 MAJOR MAC (25) (7) (R) Captain Royal Horse Artillery D. Williams 10/11 10... Capt E. Andrews (7)  
8. 6/2658 NO JOKER (18) (R) Captain Royal Horse Artillery D. Williams 10/11 10... Capt R. Bell (7)  
9. 6/2659 TORNADO (22) (7) (R) Captain Royal Horse Artillery D. Williams 10/11 10... Mr D. Williams (7) B  
10. 6/2660 NO JOKER (18) (R) Captain Royal Horse Artillery D. Williams 10/11 10... Mr C. P. Bell (7)  
11. 6/2661 TORNADO (22) (7) (R) Captain Royal Horse Artillery D. Williams 10/11 10... Mr C. P. Bell (7)

**BETTING:** 5-6 No Joker, 6-7 Tornado, 7-8 Major Mac, 8-9 Bell, 9-10 Captain Royal

**FORM GUIDE**

**NO JOKER:** (18) (R) Captain Royal Horse Artillery D. Williams 10/11 10... Mr C. P. Bell (7)  
10. 6/2662 TORNADO (22) (7) (R) Captain Royal Horse Artillery D. Williams 10/11 10... Mr C. P. Bell (7)

**2.15 GUNNER HERITAGE CAMPAGNA NOVICE CHASE (CLASS D)**  
£5,500 added 2m 4f 11yds Penalty Value £3,779

1. 1A/215 GUNNER HERITAGE (18) (7) (R) P. Hester 10/11 10... R. Johnson

2. 1A/216 HARRINGTON LADY (1.05) (7) (R) P. Hester 10/11 10... R. Johnson

3. 12/252 PONTON BRIDGE (10) (8) (R) (S) (M) P. Hester 10/11 10... D. Colchester

4. 6/2640 CHAPPUCCI (18) (8) (M) Hester 10/11 10... R. Johnson

5. 6/2655 HARRINGTON LADY (1.05) (7) (R) P. Hester 10/11 10... R. Johnson

**BETTING:** 4-7 Hester, 5-8 Colchester, 10-1 Key Player, 25-1 Chappucci, 31-2

**FORM GUIDE**

**PONTON BRIDGE:** has had a 100% record in the last seven days, including a win at the Festival. He has beaten the two best in the race, namely by a comfortable six lengths from Gallois at Tewkesbury. These two are rated much the same over hurdles, but Mister Dunn's Kempton defeat at the hands of Greenbook and Landi Afar had something to do with over fences. Just Bruce has been beaten three times, landing a Leicester maiden chase and faces a very stiff task against the others. Selection: HARRINGTON LADY

**2.25 NEWCASTLE HANDICAP CHASE (CLASS E)** £5,000 added 3m 11yds Penalty Value £5,135

1. 2/2614 DENVER BAY (17) (7) (R) P. Hester 10/11 10... Mr D. Muller-Hedges (7) B

2. 2/2615 CEDRON (24) (7) (R) Captain Royal 10/11 10... Mr D. Muller-Hedges (7) B

3. 2/2616 TORNADO (22) (7) (R) Captain Royal 10/11 10... Mr D. Muller-Hedges (7) B

**BETTING:** 4-6 Denver Bay, 7-8 Tornado, 8-10 Muller-Hedges

**FORM GUIDE**

**TORNADO:** (22) (7) (R) Captain Royal 10/11 10... Mr D. Muller-Hedges (7) B

**3.00 BIRMINGHAM NOVICE CHASE (CLASS E)** £4,500 added 2m

1. P-1025 TEARAWAY (18) (7) (R) M. Hester 9/11 10... Mr D. Muller-Hedges (7) B

2. P-1026 COPPER CARS (18) (7) (R) M. Hester 9/11 10... Mr D. Muller-Hedges (7) B

3. P-1027 GRIMME (18) (7) (R) M. Hester 9/11 10... Mr D. Muller-Hedges (7) B

**BETTING:** 4-5 Copper Cars, 5-6 Grimme, 6-7 Tearaway, 7-8 Muller-Hedges

**FORM GUIDE**

**TEARAWAY:** (18) (7) (R) M. Hester 9/11 10... Mr D. Muller-Hedges (7) B

**3.10 CULLERCOATS HANDICAP (CLASS E)** £4,925 added 3m 21f 32yds

1. 2/2612 DOMINO FLYER (18) (7) (R) Captain Royal 9/11 10... Mr D. Muller-Hedges (7) B

2. 2/2613 SHERRY (18) (7) (R) Captain Royal 9/11 10... Mr D. Muller-Hedges (7) B

3. 2/2614 SPANISH VENGE (24) (7) (R) Captain Royal 9/11 10... Mr D. Muller-Hedges (7) B

4. 2/2615 PONTE (18) (7) (R) Captain Royal 9/11 10... Mr D. Muller-Hedges (7) B

5. 2/2616 CHADLEIGH LANE (20) (7) (R) Captain Royal 9/11 10... Mr D. Muller-Hedges (7) B

6. 2/2617 CHADLEIGH LANE (20) (7) (R) Captain Royal 9/11 10... Mr D. Muller-Hedges (7) B

7. 2/2618 CHADLEIGH LANE (20) (7) (R) Captain Royal 9/11 10... Mr D. Muller-Hedges (7) B

8. 2/2619 CHADLEIGH LANE (20) (7) (R) Captain Royal 9/11 10... Mr D. Muller-Hedges (7) B

9. 2/2620 CHADLEIGH LANE (20) (7) (R) Captain Royal 9/11 10... Mr D. Muller-Hedges (7) B

**BETTING:** 4-5 Domino Flyer, 5-6 Spanish Venge, 6-7 Ponter, 7-8 Chadleigh Lane, 8-9 Muller-Hedges

**FORM GUIDE**

**CHADLEIGH LANE:** (20) (7) (R) Captain Royal 9/11 10... Mr D. Muller-Hedges (7) B

**3.40 KELLINGWORTH MAIDEN STAKES (CLASS E)** £2,875 added 2m

1. 1A/234 CROOKY NOO (18) (7) (R) P. Hester 9/11 10... Mr D. Muller-Hedges (7) B

2. 1A/235 DECEIT R (18) (7) (R) P. Hester 9/11 10... Mr D. Muller-Hedges (7) B

3. 12/2614 MELBOURNE (18) (7) (R) P. Hester 9/11 10... Mr D. Muller-Hedges (7) B

4. 6/2654 CHILLING (18) (7) (R) P. Hester 9/11 10... Mr D. Muller-Hedges (7) B

5. 6/2655 HOBBY (18) (7) (R) P. Hester 9/11 10... Mr D. Muller-Hedges (7) B

6. 6/2656 PERIODICAL (18) (7) (R) P. Hester 9/11 10... Mr D. Muller-Hedges (7) B

7. 6/2657 SHAMROK (18) (7) (R) P. Hester 9/11 10... Mr D. Muller-Hedges (7) B

8. 6/2658 TORNADO (18) (7) (R) P. Hester 9/11 10... Mr D. Muller-Hedges (7) B

9. 6/2659 VENGE (18) (7) (R) P. Hester 9/11 10... Mr D. Muller-Hedges (7) B

**BETTING:** 4-5 Crooky Noo, 5-6 Melbourne, 6-7 Hobby, 7-8 Tornado, 8-9 Sharmrook, 9-10 Periodical, 10-1 Venge

**FORM GUIDE**

**SHAMROK:** (18) (7) (R

## sport

# There should be no argument about the outstanding discoveries of the season, Richard Hill and Colin Charvis

A few months ago, at a Rugby Football Union dinner where I was taken as a guest, I just missed winning a competition to choose a post-1970 Lions XV. Competition had to come nearest to a side selected by Jeff Probyn. I wanted to choose as my centres Mike Gibson and Jeremy Guscott.

But then I thought to myself: no, Guscott is too much of a "Fancy Dan" for someone like Probyn. So I put in John Dawes instead. I was wrong. Probyn chose Guscott. The moral is that it is unwise to guess someone else's motives or intentions.

Accordingly I do not intend to predict the choice Fran Cotton and his colleagues will have made when on 2 April they announce the Lions Party to tour South Africa. From Cotton's Lancastrian admiration for Rugby League players, I should

guess that it will take John Bentley as a wing and David Young as a prop. Neither is in my party, though the former League players Allan Bateman, Scott Gibbs, Alan Tait, Jonathan Davies and Scott Quinell had to come nearest to a side selected by Jeff Probyn.

I wanted to choose as my centres Mike Gibson and Jeremy Guscott. The first choice full-back is Neil Jenkins, if his arm has mended, about which we shall know more in two days' time. If he is not fit, his place goes to Mike Catt, though not necessarily as first choice. Catt, however, is already in the party, contesting the first choice outside-half position with Davies. Gregor Townsend is perhaps lucky to make the trip because he had what was, by his standards, a disappointing season. But his ability also to play as a centre tilted the balance. It is, however, essential to have two real place kickers, of whom Catt is not

one, in the side; either Jenkins and Davies or, if Jenkins is unfit, Paul Grayson and Davies.

I make Ieuan Evans captain because of his experience and because he is still the best right-wing in the British Isles – provided, and it is a big provision, he can continue to remain more or less in one piece. The English wings, Tony Underwood and Jon Sleightholme, choose themselves, and Denis Hickie comes along for his great speed and his proven try-scoring ability. Three of the centres, Bateman, Gibbs and Guscott, likewise choose themselves. The fourth position lies between Tait and Will Greenwood. I am going for Tait for his excellent scoring record.

There can be little argument about Austin Healey and Robert Howley at scrum-half. I am taking



ALAN WATKINS

Gary Armstrong also – he is willing to make the trip – for his indomitable. So far, he has hardly been mentioned by my colleagues in the Press.

The pattern I am following is to make up the 35 by choosing an additional player in each of the five spinal positions of full-back, outside-

half, scrum-half, hooker and No 8. I am certain that extra half-backs must be taken. There can be national disagreement about where the others should be accommodated. Thus there could be five centres and two hookers, or five props and two hookers. But the third hooker in Richard Cockerill enables the Leicesters front row to go on bloc. Unhappily they look slightly less formidable since their club lost to Brive in the European Cup final at Cardiff.

Clearly the present English front

five must be kept together, too, which at lock leaves the additional places to be contested by Gareth Llewellyn, Doddie Weir, Jeremy Davidson and Craig Quinell. I am choosing Davidson for his jumping and Quinell for his aggression.

It may well be, however, that

Craig's best position is, as his father

Derek's was, at No 6. Here the choices are Rob Wainwright and Lawrence Dallaglio. There should be

no argument about the outstanding discoveries of the season. Richard Hill and Colin Charvis, who both happened to be genuine No 7s, I am sorry to omit Ben Clarke at No 8 but the extra place goes to Eric Miller.

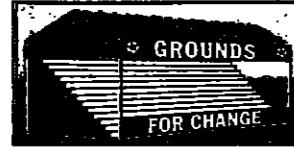
My Lions party: Full-backs: N Jenkins (or M Catt), J Staples, T Simpson. Wings: I Evans (capt), D Hickie, J Sleightholme, T Underwood. Centres: A Bateman, S Gibbs, J Guscott, A Tait. Outside-halves: M Catt (or P Grayson), J Davies, G Townsend. Scrum-halves: G Armstrong, A Healey, R Howley. Props: J Davies, D Garforth, J Leonard, G Rowntree. Hookers: R Cockerill, M Regan, K Wood. Locks: J Davidson, M Johnson, C Quinell, S Shaw. Flankers: C Charvis, L Dallaglio, R

Hill, R Wainwright, No 8s: E Miller, S Quinell, T Rodger.

This gives us 16 Englishmen, 10 Welshmen, five Irishmen and four Scotsmen. I have refrained from making political choices such as were often made in the old days – when some Irish flanker who had never even played for his native land and was completely unknown outside it, would put in an appearance to make up the numbers. With my selection it is not the Irish but the Scots who are under-represented. Certainly Ken Logan and Weir are both unlucky, and possibly Tom Smith is as well.

To forestall any angry correspondence from north of the border, I should like to say I have nothing against the Scots, as is shown by my choice of Armstrong, Tait, Townsend and Wainwright.

## Roker getting ready for its final roar



In the third article of a series on clubs moving to new grounds, Simon Turnbull looks back over Sunderland's 99 years in a stadium they leave in May

Long after the bulldozers have knocked down the last brick and timber of Sunderland's sadly condemned home, the night Roker roared its loudest will live on in the hearts of those who were there to behold it. "The night of nights," Bob Stokoe calls it. "Of all the memories of 1973, that's the one I cherish, even more than the semi-final, or the final... I can still picture Vic Halom's goal."

So can the other 51,782 of us who saw it: a first-time drive from the right-angle of the Fullwell End box that flew past Joe Corrigan and cracked in off the far post. You had to blink before realising it was not a dream.

Sunderland were 1-0 up against Manchester City – Bell, Marsh, Lee and Co – and heading for the quarter-finals of the FA Cup. This was the same Sunderland, with only four exceptions, that less than 10,000 of us had seen open the previous season against Birmingham at Roker Park; the same Sunderland, virtually, that were fourth from bottom of the Second Division when Stokoe arrived from Blackpool to replace Alan Brown as manager in November 1972.

In his first programme notes Stokoe claimed: "I am no miracle worker." Less than three months later, on the night of Tuesday 27 February, we long-suffering Rokerites began to suspect otherwise. Manchester City were not just beaten 3-1 in that FA Cup fifth-round replay, they were outclassed.

Roker Park had not witnessed such a stirring home performance since the March night in 1964 when the ground drew its biggest crowd – an estimated 70,000 inside, after the Roker End gate collapsed, and some 50,000 outside. Manchester United needed a Bobby Charlton goal with two minutes of extra-time remaining to deny Brown's Second Division team an FA Cup semi-final place.

Sunderland, the one-time "team of all the talents", had won nothing since 1937. By tea time on 5 May, 1973, Stokoe's Sun-dogs had seen off three of the pedigree sides of that era – Manchester City, Arsenal and Leeds United. The miracle had been



Above: The final scenes are played out at Roker Park before the bulldozers move in at the end of the season. Left: Billy Hughes fires past Joe Corrigan in Sunderland's 3-1 FA Cup fifth-round replay victory over Manchester City in 1973, a night that raised the old roof and a result which led to one of the most famous Wembley triumphs of all time

Photographs: Empics/ North News

performed: Sunderland and their managerial messiah were running round Wembley with the Cup.

The football world beyond

Wearside will long remember the final... Ian Porterfield's goal... Jimmy Montgomery's double save... and Sunderland's tributary manager galloping on at the final whistle. But Stokoe's favourite chapter in the fairytale he inspired will always be his playing days at Newcastle, lives in retirement now, at 66, in his native Northumberland. He will not be alone in treasures the memorable night Roker held the vision of a trophy-winning

"I've never seen a team performance like the Manchester City replay," he said, "and I've never known an atmosphere like it. To have 51,000 people there just three months after we were getting 11,000 gates... I don't know whether it would have happened at St James' Park."

Stokoe, who spent his best playing days at Newcastle, lives in retirement now, at 66, in his native Northumberland. He will not be alone in treasures the memorable night Roker held the vision of a trophy-winning

team of Porterfield, Bobby Kerr and Micky Horswill holding sway in midfield, and of Halom, Billy Hughes and Dennis Tueart raving the City defence ragged.

The thing is – 1973 apart – Roker Park has witnessed more than 30 years of hurt. You have to delve back for 41 of its 99 years to find the last team that finished in the top half of England's top division. Even then with Len Shackleton performing his princely clowning antics, Sunderland were struggling to recapture their past glories.

Part of Roker Park's enduring charm is that, with the exceptions of the Fulwell End roof and the near-total demolition of the Roker End terrace which seemed to reach for the sky at the opposite end, it remains much the same as it was when Sunderland were last champions of England. And that was before even the ultimate Roker attack: the old club offices were destroyed in a 1943 air raid.

When Alex Hastings raised

the championship trophy in 1936, the main stand behind

### GOING BACK TO THE FUTURE

Sunderland's move to a new 40,000-seat ground in August will be a going-home of sorts. Not that any Rokerites are sufficiently long in the tooth to recognise it as such, writes Simon Turnbull.

The Monkwearmouth site was Sunderland's second choice. Their original plan was to build a £22m leisure complex out of the city, near the A19, for multi-purpose use.

Roker Park has been multi-functional in its time. The 1924 Alf Blacks' team of "Invincibles", which featured George Nepli, the Maori who was rugby union's first great counter-attacking full-back, beat Durham 43-7 there. And Billy Graham packed the ground in 1984 – the first evangelical figure to do so since Bob Stokoe.

It was the first play-off win in seven attempts for Davies, while Robbins had won three of her four titles in sudden death in her six years on the tour.

Last year in this tournament, Davies came from three shots behind to win on the final hole and become the first to win a LPGA tournament three times in succession since Sandra Haynie took the Charity Golf Classic from 1973-75.

Laurie Brower, without a victory in six years and making the cut for the first time in five attempts this year, finished tied for third place after shooting a 70 with five birdies.

Also at 281 was Barb Mucha, who struggled to a 73 with crucial bogeys on the 10th, 11th and 12th holes after carding a course record-equalling 65 in the first round.

### Surge brings 10th title for Mickelson

Phil Mickelson fired a final round seven-under-par 65 on Sunday to win the Bay Hill Invitational tournament in Orlando by three strokes for his 10th career title on the PGA Tour.

Mickelson had a late charge to beat the Australian Stuart Appleby, the winner of last week's Honda Classic. Mickelson picked up six strokes in holes on the back nine to finish 16 strokes under par. Appleby came in at 13-under with a bogey on the final hole for a

Tied for third place at 12-under were Payne Stewart, with 67, Mark O'Meara, who closed with a 70, and overnight leader Omar Uresti, who shot 71.

"Winning Arnold Palmer's tournament makes this week special especially to do it the week that he came back from cancer," Mickelson, 26, said of the tournament's legendary host who returned to the links after recent prostate cancer surgery.

Only Jack Nicklaus won more tournaments than Mickelson by the age of 26, but the Golden Bear had won all four major titles by that age. Mickelson, who has yet to win a major, won \$270,000 (£168,000) for this victory.



## Storey carries weight for Cambridge

### Rowing

HUGH MATHESON

Oxford and Cambridge arrived on the Tideway together yesterday and, after a brief paddle to re-acquaint themselves with the Thames after training in the Netherlands and Nottingham respectively, they went to what Oxford's Dutch coach, Rene Mijnders, called "a circus" of the official weigh-in.

There was precious little of rowing substance for the assembled media and when Tim Foster, the Olympic bronze medallist who is now stroking Oxford, was asked by a peroxide presenter to "show us a bit of biopel" he was able only to flash his fittings in gaping astonishment.

After the hype is stripped away there is little of value in the raw data. Cambridge have slight-

ly the heavier crew but there is less than half a kilo difference in the 90kg (1st 2lb) average. Most of the difference comes from the presence of 16st Alex Storey at No 5 for Cambridge.

Cambridge are also fractionally the taller group at 6ft 5in. Over the past century the heavier crew has tended to win but it has made no difference in the 1996s when they are all tall, slim and blessed with the muscle definition which comes from body fat counts below 10 per cent.

What is new can be seen when the crews are on the water. Eight years ago Cambridge began to develop an easier, more flowing stroke to help them lift their combined three-quarters of a ton, plus the boat, over the 4½ miles course. Oxford persisted with a more heroic, effortful style with a harder smash at the start of the stroke; and in 1993,

Storey carried this elusive light-fingered continuous cycle with the blade which has more effect for less visual effort.

The Light Blues are fortunate to have James Ball back in the stroke seat. The 22-year-old theologian had retired after winning last year and was not available for the trial in December.

Behind him, in the seven seat, is Damien Maltarp, a Dane who went to Eton as a sixth form scholar after Grammar school in Kent. He learned to row at Cambridge but shows no surprise at his senior position in the boat. At No 6 is Alan Watson, who has been promoted from last year's reserve crew, Goldie.

In the five seat is the bea-est man in the race, Storey, a freshman at 22, who has come in from the British Olympic eight.

Oxford have a quartet of young Brits, Charlie Humphreys and Nick Robinson from Hampton School, and James Roycroft and Andrew Lindsey from Eton.

The middle three, Roberto Blanda from Italy, Luka Gruber from Croatia and an American Jordan Irving, are led by Tim Foster a world class stroke.

Only Jack Nicklaus won more tournaments than Mickelson by the age of 26, but the Golden Bear had won all four major titles by that age. Mickelson, who has yet to win a major, won \$270,000 (£168,000) for this victory.

مكتبة من الأصل

# Ivanisevic silences the partisans

## Tennis

JOHN ROBERTS  
reports from Key Biscayne

A pain in the neck ended Goran Ivanisevic's run of success at last year's Lipton Championships here, and the temperamental Croat is determined not to allow pains in the neck of the human variety to handicap his prospects on this occasion.

When the interaction of a partisan crowd became too ravenous in response to one or two unpiping decisions during Ivanisevic's third-round match against Florida's Vince Spadea on Sunday night, the Croat made an effort to hold himself in check.

However, having survived the contest, 3-6, 7-6, 6-4, the fourth-seeded Ivanisevic pointed a finger at a number of his persecutors. "There are idiots everywhere, but especially here," he said afterwards. "It's OK, it's a free country, so any idiot can come and watch tennis."

The heckling intensified during the final set, when the umpire, Carlos Bernardo twice overruled line calls in favour of Ivanisevic, and ordered the points to be replayed. A frustrated Spadea later threw his racket and was penalised a point for making a gesture towards the chair, missing afterwards that he had turned a low one into a high five and the umpire "interpreted it the wrong way".

Ivanisevic described the official's decisions as "ridiculous" and the atmosphere as "just chaotic", adding that when play is interrupted by a noisy crowd the effect can be similar to a rain delay or one caused by injury.

"You just sit there forever, not moving," he said. "I had some bad things go against me, I guess Goran did, too, and the crowd got extremely involved. I just got too consumed with what was going on rather than focusing and capitalising on the opportunities I did have control of."



A determined Monica Seles, the No 4 seed, powers her way to victory over Amy Frazier

Photograph: AP

rounds. But yesterday he ran into the No 2 seed, Thomas Muster, who generally has a point to make, on and off the court. The Austrian won, 6-2.

Muster will be remembered here for the Lipton final he missed in 1989, when instead he was on his way home to undergo surgery to severed ligaments in his left knee after being struck by a drunk driver.

He arrived at the Lipton last March as the No 1 seed and lost in his opening match. "I've never had much luck at this tournament," he said. "I'm feel-

ing good this year. I'm playing well and I'm confident. But everybody reaching the round of 16 or quarter-final is in good shape and is playing well. It's a long event. A lot of things can happen."

True. In the women's singles, the No 2 seed has already been eliminated. Arantxa Sanchez Vicario's dismal run of form continued with a 6-0, 7-5 defeat by Sandrine Testud.

It is not as if the 24-year-old French player is one of the bright young things on the tour, a Martina Hingis, Venus Williams or Anna Kournikova. Testud, ranked No 29, had lost her three previous matches against the Spaniard, but she managed not to suffer a let-down after zooming through the opening set and recovered after being broken when serving for the match at 5-4.

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## Fife take flight on road to Manchester

## Ice hockey

STEVE PINDER

While Sheffield Steelers and Nottingham Panthers were booking their passage to Saturday's Superleague championship final at Manchester's Nynex Arena - beating Cardiff Devils and Ayr Scottish Eagles in the weekend's semi-finals - the battle was on to make the Premier League final that will act as the curtain raiser to the main event.

Fife Flyers, from the smaller Northern Premier League,

booked their place in the championship final with Saturday's 3-0 victory against Whitley Warriors. In the final they will meet either Slough Jets or Swindon Ice Lords, the top two sides in the southern based Premier League, who will battle it out tomorrow and on Thursday over two legs.

Fife overcame Whitley, despite the opposition recording 30 shots on goal. The Flyers started with just a lone marker from John Haig in the first period, but then added two goals in the second and third periods without reply. Marin McKay

earned his side a shut out and a place at Manchester.

Swindon limbered up for their semi-final with a 6-0 demolition of Kingston Hawks but had a tougher match against Guildford Flames, who forced the match into overtime with just minutes left on the clock.

The statutory 10 minutes could not produce a goal and the match went to penalties.

Guildford, having earlier pulled their goaltender, Petri Engman, after he had conceded three goals in the first 20 minutes, put him back in for the final. Jets were already through to meet Swindon.

Pearce's shot, Jamie Thompson saved Derek Decosty's attempt, and Swindon won 8-7.

Slough had a much easier time against Guildford on the Saturday, recording a comfortable 6-1 win. However, the following day, against Kingston Hawks, Slough just managed to force overtime. Derek Higdon scoring a power-play goal with a minute left to make the score 2-2. Hawks took only two more minutes to win the game through Dainius Baubu, but while Kingston took the pride, Jets were already through to meet Balmain that he wants to leave the club where he has spent the whole of his professional career.

### SPORTING DIGEST

Huddersfield this Friday plus Wokes and Grimby on Saturday have been postponed due to international call-ups.

FC GENEVE will play FC Basel on Saturday, 21 March, at 19.30, 40, 45, 48. No claims are required; wins are sent automatically; dividend is moderate.

NATIONWIDE FOOTBALL: Re-

arranged fixtures: Wed 9 April: Charlton v Birmingham, 22 April: Wolves v Grimsby, 23 April: West Ham v Birmingham, 25 April: Bristol City v Chesterfield, 7 May: Bradford v Cheltenham, 9 May: Bradford v Charlton, 11 May: Bristol City v Birmingham, 13 May: West Ham v Birmingham, 15 May: Birmingham v Charlton, 17 May: Bradford v Birmingham, 19 May: Birmingham v Birmingham, 21 May: Birmingham v Birmingham, 23 May: Birmingham v Birmingham, 25 May: Birmingham v Birmingham, 27 May: Birmingham v Birmingham, 29 May: Birmingham v Birmingham, 30 May: Birmingham v Birmingham, 31 May: Birmingham v Birmingham, 1 June: Birmingham v Birmingham, 3 June: Birmingham v Birmingham, 5 June: Birmingham v Birmingham, 7 June: Birmingham v Birmingham, 9 June: Birmingham v Birmingham, 11 June: Birmingham v Birmingham, 13 June: Birmingham v Birmingham, 15 June: Birmingham v Birmingham, 17 June: Birmingham v Birmingham, 19 June: Birmingham v Birmingham, 21 June: Birmingham v Birmingham, 23 June: Birmingham v 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**Roker's final roar**  
Simon Turnbull on Sunderland's famous arena, page 26

# sport

TUESDAY 25 MARCH 1997 • THE INDEPENDENT

**Heavy hype**

Razzmatazz at the Boat Race weigh-in, page 26



Not the England squad: Glenn Hoddle, whose selection for this weekend's friendly with Mexico has been depleted by injuries, takes time out from preparing the senior team to demonstrate the new Footwall to a group of young footballers at Bisham Abbey yesterday. The Footwall - life-size colour images of England internationals that act as targets - is designed to improve passing skills'.

Photograph: Ben Radford/Allsport

## Hoddle denies falling out with Ferguson

### Football

MARK BURTON

Rift? What rift? Glenn Hoddle last night dismissed suggestions of a dispute between himself and the Manchester United manager, Alex Ferguson.

After United's victory at Everton on Saturday, Ferguson announced that he would not be sending the injured Gary Neville, Gary Pallister or David Beckham to join the England squad at their Buckinghamshire headquarters to have their fitness checked ahead of Saturday's friendly match against Mexico. But after he and the England coach spoke on the phone at the weekend, Hoddle agreed that Pallister and Beckham should remain in Manchester for treatment.

"I was at the match where Gary and David got injured and

it is down to my decision whether players must turn up," Hoddle said.

"I spoke to Alex and there wasn't a problem between us. He was only too pleased to let David and Philip step up. Philip will come in if Gary isn't 100 per cent fit."

Colin Hendry will shrug off the nagging pain from a long-standing groin injury to help Scotland's World Cup cause. The Blackburn centre-back will report for duty for Scotland's crucial matches against Estonia at Kilmarnock on Saturday, and Austria, at Celtic Park next Wednesday.

Bobby Gould hopes Mark Hughes will recover from a groin strain to line up in his Wales team for Saturday's World Cup qualifier against Belgium in Cardiff. Hughes appeared as a second-half substitute in Chelsea's 1-0 defeat at

Middlesbrough at the weekend, despite the injury. But he was not due to join a rendezvous for the rest of the Wales squad in Newport last night.

Belgium also have problems. Luc Nilis, their PSV Eindhoven striker, has pulled out of the squad. Belgium's coach, Georges Leekens, could also be without Philippe Albert, the Newcastle defender who has a knee injury, and Belgium's 1996 player of the year, Franky van der Elst, who has a groin problem.

English Premiership clubs could lose millions of pounds on the transfer market if Fifa, as expected, announces today that the "Bosman" ruling, giving free transfers to out-of-contract players, will be extended to cover footballers of all nationalities moving between clubs in European Union countries. At the moment, only European players become free

agents at the end of their contracts.

The Professional Footballers' Association's chief executive, Gordon Taylor, was encouraged by the likely development, saying a move would mean clubs being less tempted to look abroad for their player purchases. "I think the stance is inevitable really, and looking positively it could encourage clubs to look more inwardly, if they are not going to get money back on purchases," Taylor said.

News from Portugal yesterday was far from encouraging for Manchester United fans who went to their club's Euro-

pean Cup match in Oporto on Wednesday. The Portuguese internal affairs minister, Alberto Costa, said yesterday that police were fully justified in firing rubber bullets and anti-riot pellets at United fans after the draw with Porto.

Costa said the police report into the clashes with some of the 10,000 visiting United fans showed that officers "performed their duty. They prevented what could have been a tragedy," he said.

Porto police said after last Wednesday's match that they fired on the fans to keep them from leaving the stadium before

local supporters had dispersed. The United fans claimed police over-reacted and used excessive force, but Costa said that no official complaint had been received from the British authorities over the way police handled the incident.

Portsmouth have taken swift action following the crowd trouble at Queen's Park Rangers on Saturday by banning one supporter indefinitely. Play was stopped for 18 minutes and the players were taken off the field as trouble flared in two parts of Loftus Road. The Football Association will hold a full inquiry into the incident.

Fabrizio Ravanelli will be fit to lead the Middlesbrough attack against Leicester in the Coca-Cola Cup final on 6 April. The Italian international, who has scored 26 goals this season, has made good progress in his recovery from a hamstring injury.

Kenny Dalglish is poised to make the I.A. Akranes striker Bjarni Gudjonsson his first signing for Newcastle. The 18-year-old, who has played for Iceland's Under-21 side, has had trials with Liverpool and Newcastle, and is valued at about £500,000.

Gillingham say Brighton must pay them £300,000 rent,

even if the troubled south coast club abandons plans to ground-share at the Pinesfield Stadium.

The consortium trying to take over Brighton, led by Dick Knight, are hoping Albion can play their home games at Hove Greyhound Stadium for the next three years until a new stadium is built. However, Gillingham's chairman, Paul Scally, is adamant that his club want the money they have already been promised.

Brighton signed an agreement to pay us £150,000 a year for two years and whether they come to us or not that is our money," he said.

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**THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD**

No. 3255, Tuesday 25 March

By Andrew

Monday's Solution

**ACROSS**

- Winning cricketers if rained off could be thus browned off? (7)
- Upstart expected endless love (7)
- Judge arrives, about to be effective? (7)
- Lovers' meeting once in Coventry street (5)
- Independent support for book (9)
- Afably sad about exultant cry of farewell (5)
- How to arrange advancement of the clergy? (9)
- Insect bites possibly lead to time of crisis? (6,3)
- Get money off taking a pound of soothing ointment (5)
- Tardy type but not dead on arrival? (4-5)
- It's tossed about Braemar with arm going? (5)
- It's offensive in the main as ruminant eats fancy bun (7)
- Record a right to gather plant for cooking? (7)
- Urge to get railway features which will go in scrapbook (5,8)
- Satellist named after archaeopteryx? (5,4)
- Some fat hefty burglar is responsible for this? (5)
- Kid's English bit of merriment (5)
- Uter profanities when confusing sheep & lamb (9)
- A mega ice-floe on right is a thing found in the ocean? (9)
- More cut up about trusted? (5)
- One's a sight better for this study? (13)
- Having no money? Then dear stuff's out - very sad (6-7)
- They're prickly about first part of play? (5)

**DOWN**

- Very blue conservative sadly comes up with debts (9)
- Cloth rug in picture is eminently practical (9)
- Improvising, one fishing catches 50 (2-7)
- Some quite normal singer (5)
- Show response as short clergymen holds one (5)
- Having no money? Then dear stuff's out - very sad (6-7)
- They're prickly about first part of play? (5)

### Rich vultures gather over Memorial Ground

#### Rugby Union

CHRIS HEWITT and DAVID LLEWELLYN

Bristol's unlikely Courage League victory over cup semi-finalists Sale on Saturday was achieved in the absence of their England forwards Simon Shaw and Mark Regan. Sadly for the struggling West Countrymen, they may have to get used to life without their quota of star quality. Harlequins, Bath and Wasps, richer and more glamourous and keen to keep it that way, are hovering like vultures over the Memorial Ground pickings.

Harlequins are expected to make a formal bid for Shaw before the week is out - the England second row was scheduled to discuss his future with David Tyler, the Bristol chief executive, yesterday - and they may try for a quick close on the deal by offering Glyn Llewellyn, the

former Welsh international lock, in part-exchange. Bath have also asked Bristol for permission to speak to Shaw, whose contract expires at the end of the season.

Both Bath and Wasps, the league leaders, have signalled an interest in Regan, who has a year of his contract to run. Alan Davies, the Bristol coach, slapped a £500,000 price tag on his hooker's head at the weekend - two-thirds of Bristol's entire wage bill - and any offer of that magnitude would be next to impossible to resist.

Sadly for the French club Brive, Christophe Lamaison's inability to resist an off-the-bull shoulder-charge on Scotland's Craig Chalmers during the Five Nations match in Paris 11 days ago has cost the European champions the services of their outstanding goalkicker for the next month. Lamaison, whose marksmanship did so much to

earn his country an unexpected Grand Slam, was yesterday suspended for 30 days by a Five Nations disciplinary panel.

Lamaison declined to attend the hearing. His case was pleaded by Jean-Claude Skrela, the French coach, and Guy Laporte, vice-president of the French Rugby Federation, but their arguments failed to sway the match commissioner, Peter Boyle, who announced his decision after considering video as well as oral evidence from both sides.

Gloucester are in talks with Wasps over a possible move to Sudbury for their talented young hooker, Phil Greening. The 21-year-old, who has won two caps as an England replacement, will delay any decision until later in the summer after whichever tour - the Lions to South Africa, or England to Argentina - he goes on.

Alan Watkins, page 26